



THE JERSEY Sierran

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Fighting for a cleaner and healthier New Jersey for all!

July-September 2023

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POLITICAL CHAIR'S REPORT

The Rising Trend of Voting by Mail

By Karen Becker • Political Committee Chair, political.chair@newjerseysierraclub.org



In August 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic, Gov. Phil Murphy signed an executive order to protect public health by mailing active registered voters a vote-by-mail

(VBM) ballot for the November General Election. New Jersey voters could sit at their kitchen table and cast their ballots rather than risk getting infected by the virus at the polls. Some voters were skeptical about the process and others felt it was impersonal and chalked it up to a "one-time-only" experience. But for many others, this has become the preferred method of voting mostly because of its convenience. Finding the perfect time slot without long lines can be next to impossible. If you do get

stuck waiting in line, forget about surfing the net. Cell phones are not permitted at polling places. Work, school, kids, transportation, illness, and unexpected travel are just some of the things that can prevent you from going to the polls on Election Day.

I started voting by mail years ago and, I have to admit, I was skeptical about how the system worked. Would my vote be counted? I did my homework and found that VBM is very secure. Ballots are sent directly to each voter's home and their signatures are validated with what is on file. If your handwriting has changed over the years, or if there is a minor omission, you can give your local board of elections permission to contact you to "cure" your ballot. You're also provided with an envelope with prepaid postage, or you can drop your ballot in

a secure drop box within the county you reside. Not making an extra trip to the polling place is also kind to the environment.

For everything you need to know about obtaining or voting with a VBM ballot, including tracking your ballot, visit the [NJ Voter Information Portal](#).

The General Election is November 7. We urge you to vote and support candidates endorsed by the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. An endorsement from our organization indicates the candidate is committed to protecting the environment and has a record of supporting conservation and social justice efforts.

Endorsements

See the table for Sierra Club candidate endorsements. Additional announcements will be forthcoming.

State Senate	
Troy Singleton	Dist. 7
Linda Greenstein	Dist. 14
Andrew Zwicker	Dist. 16
Bob Smith	Dist. 17
Patrick Diegnan	Dist. 18
Richard Codey	Dist. 27
State Assembly	
Verlina Reynolds-Jackson	Dist. 15
Sterley Stanley	Dist. 18
James Kennedy	Dist. 22
John McKeon	Dist. 27
Britnee Timberlake	Dist. 34
Municipal	
John Kashwick	Clinton Town Council

All candidates are incumbents. This table was prepared prior to the June 6 primary.

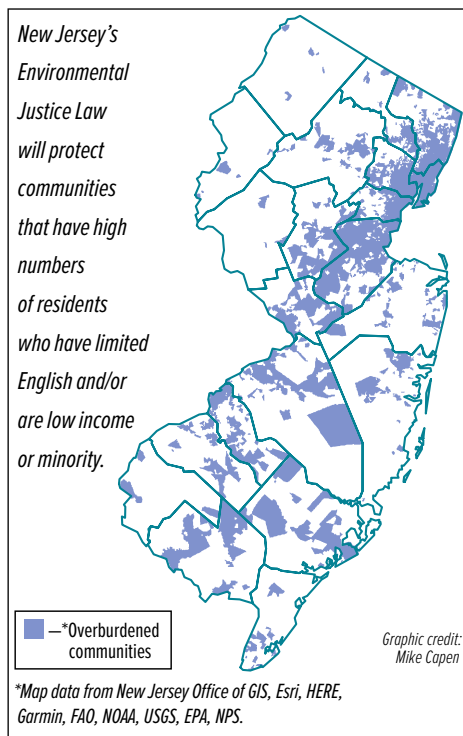
Resource

NJ Voter Information Portal: bit.ly/41bPqsf

New Jersey Adopts Environmental Justice Law Rules

The statistics are appalling. Two of the waste incinerators in the United States that emit the largest amounts of lead annually are in Camden and Newark, NJ. In-state polluters are also high up on the list of particulate matter emitters, and in fact, New Jersey's incinerators are [predominantly located](#) in environmental justice communities, defined as communities that already have more than their fair share of polluting industry, or are home to large concentrations of people of color and low-income residents.

In fact, roughly half the residents of New Jersey live in environmentally burdened communities, according to a map produced by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Therefore, it was a great relief to advocates for clean air and a safe environment when the DEP adopted rules implementing New Jersey's environmental



justice law, albeit more than two years after the state Legislature approved it.

The environmental justice law ensures that state officials can block new polluting industry or expansions of existing facilities that would exacerbate disproportionately high pollution in these communities. It would also allow the public to weigh in on whether these developments should be allowed when companies seek permits for new installations or expansion.

"Fossil fuel projects in overburdened communities will no longer be the norm. We have come to an inflection point in New Jersey's history that realization of public health is a priority regardless of your ZIP code," said Renée Pollard, chair of the Sierra Club's NJ Chapter Environmental and Social Justice Committee. She noted that a clean, healthy, livable environment is a basic human right.

Other states have also moved forward with environmental justice laws. They include Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Oregon, Illinois, California, and Wisconsin.

The new law requires that environmental officials, when considering permit requests, must seriously consider added burdens on environmental justice communities, and many types of facilities are specifically named in the law: gas-fired power plants, co-generation facilities, recycling facilities, incinerators, landfills, sludge processing plants, sewage treatment facilities, and scrap metal and medical waste operations. But "any major source of air pollution" is covered by this law.

The NJ "Business & Industry Association" protested adoption of this law, contending it would discourage

>continued on page 3

Our Offices Are Now in Hamilton!

We're settling into our new offices in Hamilton Township at the Modern at Mill One! This is an enormous old textile mill renovated for sustainability, featuring high ceilings, wood beams, skylights, and exposed brick walls. And, yes, solar panels on the roof! We have more office and meeting space, more parking space, and easy access from Routes 1, 206, and 130 and Interstates 95 and 195. We're also just minutes away from the New Jersey State House.

Our address is a mouthful: **Sierra Club NJ Chapter, Social Profit Center, Building A, Suite A220, 1 N. Johnston Ave., Hamilton, NJ, 08609.** All official Club mail should now be sent here,

including donations and business correspondence. **Our telephone number is still (609) 656-7612.**

"At our new location at the Social Profit Center, the Club remains close to the action at the State House while having much more room to host our volunteers, members, and supporters," Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot said. "The facility has large windows and collaborative space



The NJ Chapter offices are now in a repurposed former luggage and clothing factory.

for strategizing and hosting events. Thank you so much to all the volunteers who helped us move in. We couldn't be happier to be here in Hamilton!"

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Electronic Supplement

(Available from the Chapter website)

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What Scientific Authorities Have to Say About Whale Mortalities

By George Moffatt • Offshore Wind Committee Member

Respected scientific authorities have closely studied whale mortalities off the East Coast over the years and have ruled out any connection between these deaths and wind turbine development activity. This is what they have to say:

Since 2016, NOAA has [reported](#) 194 humpback whale deaths along the entire US East Coast. About 40% had evidence of vessel strikes or fishing gear entanglement. NOAA had an independent team of scientists review the data and determine next steps for investigation.

NOAA's [position](#) on sound surveys

used for preliminary wind farm development is as follows:

"There is no evidence that noise resulting from development-related site characterization surveys could potentially cause mortal-

ity of whales, and there are no specific links between recent large whale mortalities and currently ongoing surveys. These are geological and geophysical surveys conducted by wind energy developers. We will continue to gather data to help us determine the cause of death for these mortality events."

This February, the [Marine Mammal Commission](#), an independent government agency, also exonerated offshore windfarms. The commission, which has made marine mammal deaths a priority for investigation, [rejected a link](#) between mortality events and offshore wind energy development. "Although these [deaths] have generated media

interest and public scrutiny, humpback whale strandings are not new," the commission said. On the subject of right whales and their alarming decline (fewer than 350 remain), the commission said, "sub-lethal effects of ship strikes and entanglement can impair the growth and reproduction of right whales and further impair their recovery."

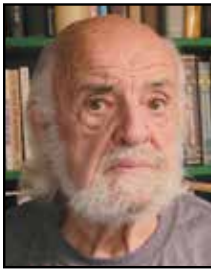
And [Rutgers University's](#) Offshore

Wind Energy Collaborative has [stat-ed](#), "There is no evidence linking whale mortalities to any one specific factor, including offshore wind development.... Wind acoustic surveys are of high

frequency or lower intensity low frequency which are harder for baleen whales—including humpback whales—to hear."

The collaborative also stated, "Decisions, particularly those as paramount as calls to shut down the development of a climate-mitigating renewable energy, need to be based on scientific data and solid evidence and consider the entirety of factors contributing to observed or perceived impacts."

This leads us to an overlooked reality: the menhaden—a moveable feast to whales—are swimming farther north and closer to the coastline, following the climate-driven rising ocean tem-



Humpback whale flukes with NOAA research vessel in background. Credit: NOAA

The Facts About Whale Deaths

Editor's Note

Since at least 2017, when North Atlantic right whale mortalities and serious injuries and illnesses spiked, the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has carefully tracked marine mammal mortalities. In up-to-date tables, NOAA lists all the causes of mortalities and illnesses/injuries to right whales and humpback whales it was able to confirm, and nowhere in those data does it say wind turbines or development of these structures. The most common causes? Vessel strikes and entanglements with fishing gear.

On NOAA's website, there are many heartbreaking recent pictures of whales plowing through the water entangled in fishing lines. Among the few causes of whale deaths that have been clearly identified as responsible for the mortalities along the Jersey coast, vessel strikes have been high up on the list.

It may be more than a coincidence that New Jersey by the end of 2022 had become the No. 1 port of call in the country for cargo ships, thanks to massive expansion by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which has seen the movement of goods climb 27% since 2019. Cargo vessels are big, and they don't stop for whales.

What has not been proven is that preliminary wind farm construction activity, which so far has proceeded no further than location surveys, is at fault in this spate of tragic deaths.

A broad coalition of environmental organizations, including the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club, agrees it's important to discover why we're seeing increased whale mortalities in New Jersey and elsewhere on the East Coast; however, correlating them to wind turbine site exploration is unfounded and premature. The coalition encourages more research into the potential impacts of turbines and their construction on wildlife but doesn't believe plans for future production should be halted unless a direct correlation can be proven.

peratures. "A primary food source of humpback whales, Atlantic menhaden have been increasing in biomass in the region since the 1980s, and anecdotal observations suggest that their distributions have been shifting closer to shore and staying later into winter. We do not know why. Coincidentally, these nearshore areas are where juvenile humpbacks have been observed feeding at the surface, potentially increasing susceptibility to vessel strikes or entanglement," the Rutgers collaborative [stated](#).

But these evidence-based conclusions have not been accepted by opponents of offshore windfarms. And remarkably, they also are ignoring the recent dire warning from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The international research agency is [warning](#) that, with Earth's surface temperatures already 1.09°C warmer since the late 1800s, the climate crisis "has already arrived" and the critical, threshold 1.5°C warming mark will be reached or exceeded

in the early 2030s, bringing on extreme heatwaves, ocean level rise of 10 to 30 inches, desertification of an additional 7% of the Earth's land area, and devastation to the world's coral reefs.

These findings should have everyone clamoring for the clean energy of ocean windfarms and ignoring disinformation promulgated by oil and gas interests and other naysayers. The *New York Times* and *The Intercept*, another respected investigative media source, have [identified](#) the fossil fuel industry-funded Caesar Rodney Institute as a "right-leaning nonprofit" that is leading the opposition to ocean windfarms, along with its spinoff, the American Coalition for Ocean Protection, with chapters in NY and NJ.

Resources

Humpback mortalities: bit.ly/42JUTbg

Sound surveys: bit.ly/3OdsiqB

Marine Mammal Commission: bit.ly/42HVgDb

Rutgers: bit.ly/3M5ci7m

The Intercept: bit.ly/3o7APk7

Tell NOAA how important vessel speed restrictions and safe fishing gear alternatives are: shorturl.at/prCEK

Wind Turbines? Yes! Here's Why

By Patricia Hilliard • Offshore Wind Committee Member

You may have noticed it. The oceans and bays are rising. Tides are rolling in higher than ever before. Shorelines are receding inland and beaches are disappearing. Glaciers are melting, rainfall is heavier, and storms are stronger. Floods are washing away homes in low-lying areas. Scientists explain that this is due to global warming. Those of us living in the industrialized world have burned so much coal and oil over the past 200 years that the smoke and carbon in the atmosphere have raised the earth's temperature. According to EcoWatch, "The global ocean surface temperature reached 21.1°C (approximately 70°F) in early April, the highest recorded ocean surface temperature since records began."

We need to do something now! One solution to avoid adding more carbon to the atmosphere is to use renewable energy, such as wind. The wind is fierce and frequent, especially over the seas. Can we harness it to produce the electricity we need?

Bastions of Undersea Life

Scientists are studying the effect of wind turbines on sea life. There are other human structures built in the oceans and bays that can be studied for

answers. According to The Nature Conservancy, "Oceanographers and others have observed how submerged shipwrecks and bridges can become home to wide and colorful arrays of marine species, as have the underwater portions of many offshore wind turbines in Europe, China, and other parts of the globe." The Nature Conservancy believes that with proper design and materials selection, wind turbines can support "entire communities of marine life."

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation points out, "Of all the artificial reefs in the world, those made of submerged shipwrecks are the most common, but these reefs can also be made of rocks, cinder blocks, limestone, steel, concrete, and even wood. Bridges, lighthouses, and other offshore structures also often function as artificial reefs." The foundation adds that artificial reefs not only attract fish and other wildlife but also help improve tourism, recreational fishing, and other commercial activities, although they do need to be managed carefully to avoid marine system harm.

But what about the whales? According to the Natural Resources Defense Council "... the sounds produced by

offshore wind's pre-construction surveys are much lower in energy than more powerful industrial sources, and tend to be highly directional, making it very unlikely that they drove the whales off New York and New Jersey to strand."

The World Wildlife Fund states, "Whales and other marine mammals use sound to navigate, find mates, and find food in the often-dark waters of the ocean. Seismic noises, like the air gun used by oil and gas companies to explore for oil offshore, can be deafening for these species. Excessive ocean noise from oil and gas exploration and drilling could cause injury, confusion, and even death." This is another reason to stop using fossil fuel and find ways to create renewable energy.

Is the Talk of More Jobs Just a Lot of Wind?

With the implementation of offshore wind energy, new types of jobs will be created. The wind turbines need to be manufactured, installed, and maintained, creating year-round revenue. Greater employment means income that encourages visits to beaches and recreation areas.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics re-

ports that the wind industry will need many and various types of engineers, such as, electrical, mechanical, health and safety, and industrial. But it will

also create other jobs. "The wind-energy supply chain requires the skills of many different production occupations, including machinists, computer-controlled machine tool operators, assemblers, welders, quality-control inspectors, and industrial production managers."

Better Health too? If we are no longer burning coal and oil, the air quality will improve, which will reduce asthma, heart attacks, cancer, and other illnesses.

No Need to Worry! Some people worry that the faint view of distant wind turbines will destroy the beauty of the beach. But beauty is in the eye of the beholder! What child could resist the appeal of a handheld windmill? Similarly, tourists worldwide are discovering the fun of boat tours of offshore wind farms, which are particularly lucrative for their operators.



EPA Gets Tough on PFAS

By Tony Hagen • editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

It's something like the tagline for the "Jaws 2" movie: Just when you thought it was safe to go back and drink the water....

In March, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) spoke up and told us no amount of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) is safe for human consumption and that it is proposing historically low allowable levels of PFAS in drinking water.

These are much lower than the ones New Jersey established in 2021 for three different branches of the PFAS family: PFOA, PFOS, and PFNA, which were set at 14 parts per trillion (ppt), 13 ppt, and 13 ppt, respectively.

The EPA's [proposed rule](#), for which the public comment period ended shortly before this newsletter went to press, was for maximum contamination levels (MCL) of 4 ppt for PFOA and PFOS. The EPA also added other types of PFAS to the proposed rule: PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS, and HFPO-DA (GenX chemicals).

A different formula will be applied to determine safe levels of these compounds, but the PFAS class in general is strongly linked to cancer, compromised immunology, renal complications, and fertility issues, among other health problems.

In making these moves, the EPA is acknowledging that PFAS chemicals are more dangerous than previously thought and manufacturers who use them should be kept on a shorter leash.

One reason PFAS have flown under the radar for so long is that manufacturers have been excused from so-called reporting burdens, and in its multi-pronged strategic plan the EPA intends to reduce these exemptions for PFAS.

The good news in this package of revelations is that the filtering technology we have today—charcoal, reverse osmosis, ion exchange, etc.—is

very good at removing these chemicals from the water supply.

What may not be such good news to water systems in New Jersey, where at least [130 water suppliers](#) have received MCL violation notices, is that some filtering systems installed to meet the state's 2021 MCL requirements may not be capable of achieving the EPA's new standards, which would [supersede](#) those in New Jersey.

In a recent [article](#) in *NJ Spotlight*, it was speculated that the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will grant water utilities already in violation of state standards more time to prepare for EPA restrictions, which are not expected to become effective until December 2026.

The EPA is also proposing that public water systems be required to issue public notification to customers within 30 days of violation if PFAS levels exceed MCLs.

DowDuPont, formerly DuPont, has known since at least the 1960s that PFAS are highly toxic, but it has been up to the public and the regulatory establishment to stop them. That has proved to be a very slow process. PFAS have been around since before Sputnik—more than 70 years ([graphic](#))—and we are only just getting around to regulating them and protecting the public against exposure.

A 2015 [article](#) from *The Intercept* gets to the nub of this problem: "In America, killer chemicals are essentially innocent until proven guilty."

Resources

EPA Strategic Map: bit.ly/3Hos4yL
NJ and PFAS: bit.ly/2FYu4sF
NJ Water Watch: bit.ly/3URrGbo



CHAPTER CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Our Chapter Welcomes Several Volunteers!

By Richard Isaac • Richard.Isaac@sierraclub.org

Our Chapter extends a warm welcome to the following folks as they take on their new Chapter positions:

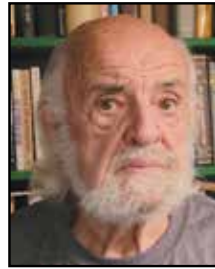
Florence Abrenica, Offshore Wind Committee Member

Florence is a development engineering manager with Triple Oak Power, developing onshore wind energy in the United States, helping to slow climate change, and accelerating the goal to 100% electrification. She is a licensed civil engineer who has spent her entire career working as a consultant on land development and site planning projects for residential, commercial, industrial, and energy clients throughout the country. Her current endeavor is learning everything there is to know about wind energy and other renewable energy, while helping develop additional solutions to climate change.



George Moffatt, Offshore Wind Committee Member

George not only has a professional background in newspapers and has written multiple articles for our *Jersey Sierran* newsletter, but also has years of experience as our Jersey Shore Group's program chair. We now welcome him as a member of our Chapter's Offshore Wind Committee, where his writing skills will especially help make a difference.



Mike Capen, Chapter Graphics Designer

With over 20 years experience as a graphic designer, Mike previously did volunteer graphic design for the Moshannon Group Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter. As he recently moved back to New Jersey, where he grew up, we are glad to now have him as our Chapter's graphics designer.

An avid hiker/trail runner who loves visiting national parks, Mike also likes doing nature photography when he can. He's currently finding new places to hike and explore here in New Jersey, and his latest favorite hiking spot is Sourland Mountain Preserve.



Parker Weiss, Youth Committee Member

Parker is a junior at the Peddie School in Hightstown. He is passionate about preserving the en-



vironment and is ready to do whatever he can for the Sierra Club. He is especially interested in summer volunteer opportunities.



Sia Satish, Youth Committee Member

Sia is an eighth grader at Thomas R. Grover Middle School, in West Windsor-Plainsboro, with a passion for the natural sciences and environmental conservation. She is part of her school's award-winning Science Olympiad team, plays in the Youth Orchestra of Central Jersey, and is training formally to be a classical dancer. She believes that being on the Youth Committee has been a fulfilling learning experience and she looks forward to contributing even more toward this cause in the future.



Leila Marcovici, Legislative Committee Member

After receiving a BS in chemistry and before going to law school, Leila began working as an environmental consultant working on matters involving the phase-out of ozone depleting chemicals in the US and worldwide. For over a decade now, she has been a practicing patent attorney, specializing in the chemical, pharmaceutical, and biotech fields. She enjoys working with startups and small businesses and helping them navigate protection of their vital and novel technologies. "I especially love when a patent intersects with a new technology that can help the environment, such as the reduction of CO₂ emissions, 'no-till agriculture,' and biodegradable plastics or other materials."

Leila loves being outdoors. While she derives great happiness being at an NJ beach during the summer months, she finds immersion in an old-growth forest to be especially restorative. She recently traveled to Iceland with her family where they saw some natural wonders and also saw the drastic changes of melting glaciers—a potent visual reminder of climate change.

Leila is thrilled to now be a member of the Chapter's Legislative Committee and is ready to review and support, where appropriate, key bills that have the power to influence and change for the better modern growth and human behavior.



The Long, Tortuous History of PFAS

1949 DuPont begins using C8 (a PFAS chemical) to manufacture Teflon cookware. Excess chemical is dumped into waterways.	1960s DuPont becomes aware that PFAS are highly toxic.	1998 EPA is alerted to hazards of PFAS.
2001 Ohio River Valley residents sickened by C8 file class action suit against DuPont and later settle for \$343 million.	2002 EPA initiates priority review of C8, a precursor to regulatory action.	2003–2007 Tests at DuPont Deepwater plant in Pennsville, NJ, reveal C8 groundwater levels as high as 46.6 ppb. One worker's C8 blood level was 4,400 ppb.
2007 NJDEP establishes a C8 drinking water guidance MCL of 0.04 ppb.	2010 Studies reveal PFAS in 70% of water samples from 20 NJ counties. Chris Christie becomes NJ governor and mandatory C8 MCL progress appears to cease.	2015 DuPont phases out C8 but starts using another PFAS chemical type: Gen-X.
2016 EPA issues nonbinding advisory for PFAS MCL in drinking water of 70 ppt.	2017 DuPont, now DowDuPont, pays \$871 million to settle more PFAS suits.	2019 NJDEP under Gov. Phil Murphy orders companies to investigate and clean up PFAS contamination.
2020 NJDEP sets MCLs for three types of PFAS: PFOA, PFOS, and PFNA (14 ppt, 13 ppt, and 13 ppt, respectively).	2023 EPA proposes drinking water MCLs of 4 ppt for PFOA and PFOS, with standards also for Gen-X, PFNA, PFBS, and PFHxS. Implementation anticipated in December 2026.	

Graphic credit: Mike Capen

DEP, Department of Environmental Protection; EPA, Environmental Protection Agency; MCL, maximum contamination level; PFAS, per- and polyfluorinated Substances; ppb, parts per billion; ppt, parts per trillion

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

continued from page 1

investment, but there's no reason why prosperity can only be achieved by fouling New Jersey's environment and making the state a less healthy place to live. Perhaps Maria Lopez-Núñez, deputy director of organizing and advocacy for New-

ark's Ironbound Community Corporation, said it best in an [interview](#) with *NJ Spotlight News*: "It is going to show other states that the sky is not going to fall if you bring environmental justice to a community," she said.

Mitigate and Adapt for Climate Change Survival

By Greg Gorman • ggorman@embargmail.com

Nature's ability to adapt to environmental changes never ceases to amaze me. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a massive swirl of floating plastic debris, is a thriving community of coastal creatures thousands of miles from their natural homes. Scientists were surprised to find thriving [sponge communities](#) under inhospitable conditions below the Antarctic Sea ice. Life is found in boiling water, sanitized clean rooms, radioactive waste, and hot tar. Life can be found nearly everywhere on Earth.

This broad distribution of life and the ability of species to survive has resulted in a great variety of living organisms. We often attribute this biodiversity to principles of genetics and evolution, as species adapt to their environment over time. Those species who fail to adapt become extinct. "Scientists predict that more than 1 million species could face extinction in the coming decades—and we lose about one species every hour," according to the Center for Biological Diversity.

"More than a century of habitat destruction, pollution, the spread of invasive species, wildlife exploitation, climate change, population growth, and other human activities has frayed the web of life," the group said in a [2020 proposal](#) for actions that the president and Congress can, and

should, implement to stem the extinction crisis at a scale necessary to achieve lasting results. This plan is consistent with Sierra Club's [initiatives](#) regarding land, air, water, and wildlife.

Specifically, Sierra Club calls for protecting 30% of lands by 2030 to fight the climate and extinction crisis. Protecting wild places will prevent pollution from drilling and logging, sequester emissions, protect against extreme weather, and provide habitat for wildlife and opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors together. Strong enforcement of the Endangered Species Act, protection of wild and scenic rivers and wetlands, and pollution abatement (particularly fossil fuel emissions and "forever" chemicals) are Club objectives.

The climate crisis imposes unique challenges for adaptation for New Jersey. Heatwaves, flooding, droughts, crop failures, and wildfires affect all life. The warming climate worsens air quality (ozone and particulate material), which aggravates lung diseases and leads to premature death. It will be more difficult for communities to protect water quality and maintain healthy



"Scientists were surprised to find thriving sponge communities under inhospitable conditions below the Antarctic Sea ice. Life is found in boiling water, sanitized clean rooms, radioactive waste, and hot tar. Life can be found nearly everywhere on Earth."

Diversity in the Woods: The NJ Chapter LGBTQ+ Section Welcomes You!

By Wanda I. Ashbrook • LGBTQ+ Section Outings Chair

Red maple trees, blue jays, goldfinches, purple flowers, evergreen trees, and let's not forget the (red) cardinals. We join with nature, a colorful and diverse world, when we go on a Sierra Club LGBTQ+ hike. We fit perfectly with all the diversity in the woods.

Sierra North Jersey LGBTQ+ hikes are opportunities for our community to be at one with ourselves and with like-minded individuals on this small blue marble we collectively call home. On our hikes we can see all the beauty; we can smell the pines and sense that there is something bigger than ourselves. On a warm spring day or a mid-winter hike we gather to be at peace with ourselves and to build community.

We humans are curious. We keep searching for new trails to explore. Often, we are little aware of how deeply a hike can affect our body, mind, and soul. We bring a friend to walk in silence or share the wonders and ex-

plore together what we might find... a feather, deer antlers, or a warm rock to sit on and picnic.

Being in the woods changes us. We learn to appreciate and act on how to protect and preserve these special places for ourselves, our friends, and family. We pick up bottles, cans, and other trash from those who were not so kind to the woods. We may come away with a realization that political action is also necessary in our fight for clean air and water on our planet.

Meet you at the trailhead! Look for our Rainbows!

For more information, check out the LGBTQ+ Section in this issue of *The Jersey Sierran*, or contact Section Chair Diane Scarangella at diascat@hotmail.com or LGBTQ+ Outings Chair Wanda Ashbrook at pridegrlnj@aim.com.



environments. New Jersey forecasts a rise in sea level of up to 2.1 feet by 2050, an increase in the state's average annual temperature by as much as 5.7 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050, and a [jump in precipitation](#) of up to 11% by the middle of this century. Climate change will have a profound effect on New Jersey.

To integrate climate change impacts and risks in our decision making, we need the best information available. Resources to assist us in this task

include the Environmental Protection Agency's Adaptation Resource Center ([bit.ly/3Wc6E7X](https://www.epa.gov/adaptation)), NJ Department of Environmental Protection climate change programs and initiatives ([bit.ly/204OZje](https://www.nj.gov/dep/climate)), the NJ Climate Resource Center at Rutgers University ([bit.ly/433PFHj](https://climate.rutgers.edu)), and NJ Future for guidance on climate adaptation and resilience planning ([bit.ly/3MkiXWO](https://www.njfuture.org)). These resources provide excellent information for communities, businesses, and families to prepare for the future.

GET OFF FOSSIL FUELS AND HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

CONVERT YOUR HOME AWAY FROM OIL AND GAS BY INSTALLING A HEAT PUMP AND GOING SOLAR

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Highlights of Recent Electrification Webinars

By Steve and Pat Miller • NJ 50 x 30 BE Team

The NJ 50 x 30 Building Electrification Team hosts monthly talks on reducing your building's energy consumption and lowering emissions. Here, we highlight tips and examples to meet these goals from three recent webinars.

2023-2-16 Yvette Viasus, the community solar engagement manager for Solar Landscape and a Sierra Club member volunteer, was the keynote speaker for the February webinar. She described New Jersey's Community Solar Energy Pilot Program from soup to nuts—the benefits and how to enroll.

Community solar provides all the benefits of rooftop solar, but on someone else's roof (or perhaps over a brownfield). It is intended for people whose roofs are unsuitable for solar—eg, renters or those in a multifamily building—or who can't afford the upfront cost of rooftop solar. With NJ's community solar, there is no upfront cost, and savings are guaranteed for the life of the project (currently about 21% below your local electric utility prices). The electricity produced is zero-emissions, making for cleaner air in the community and helping meet the state's net zero target. Anyone with an electricity account and a credit card is eligible, and 51% of the solar capacity is reserved for those with low or moderate income. New Jersey's program is designed to create local jobs and a local workforce. For further information and to sign up, visit bit.ly/3HwWedg

2023-3-16 In 2023, Diane and John Burke moved into their new two-story home, which is designed to meet high-efficiency "Passive House" standards, which achieve up to 90% reduction in energy usage. They showed how their all-electric house was insulated and sealed to provide maximum thermal retention with minimal energy needed for heating or cooling. Continuous insulation ensures no gaps under, around, or above. High-performance windows and doors complete the insulation. Fresh air is filtered in, and stale air is expelled through energy recovery ventilation units. Heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning are provided by Mitsubishi heat pumps. The water heater is an AO Smith heat pump. This custom house was factory built with

modules that were quickly assembled on-site. Diane and John plan to in-

stall rooftop solar to achieve yearly net zero energy, after assessing their actual yearly electrical consumption, including electric vehicles. New passive construction can cost only a few percentage points more than standard construction, and the savings offer a quick payback.

John stated, "We like windows, and we wanted big ones! They are really cool triple-pane European style with screens on the outside. We used Unity Homes to design our house. They built the whole model on a computer, and they made every single component indoors in a factory, so all the pieces fit together when delivered." Diane stated, "We love it! It's just perfect and really comfortable for us. If you come here and feel the atmosphere of the house, it's really clean and quiet."



Diane and John Burke's Passive House

2023-4-20 In a talk titled "Best Practices: Using Heat Pumps in Energy Efficient Buildings," Bill Amann, president of M&E Engineers, discussed heat pump selection criteria and relative efficiencies among many possible system designs, depending on building and land characteristics. He emphasized the use of "cold climate air source heat pumps," such as Mitsubishi Hyper Heat. Characteristics include variable flow refrigerant, which provides 100% heat capacity down to 5°F, and operation down to -13°F. He also discussed several ground-source heat pump system designs, including the "greenest office building in the world," a net zero building located in Amsterdam that uses an aquifer thermal energy system (ATES) to heat and cool the building.

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It's True! Cow Burps and Flatulence Help Create Dangerous Methane

By George Moffatt • gmoffattgt@aol.com

The headline was a showstopper: "Inflation Reduction Act Will Tax Cow Farts." This sounded silly, but even if true, who'd want the job of counting them?

The inflation control bill contained funding for controlling methane emissions from concentrated animal feeding and breeding operations (CAFOs)—much-criticized "factory farms" that raise dairy and meat cows, pigs, sheep, turkeys, chickens, and egg-laying hens.

These often windowless, tightly confined, and high-intensity breeding facilities—where animals may rarely see the light of day—typically have



Credit: Pixabay

many thousands of animals, while the biggest cattle "factories" can hold up to 150,000 cattle. These are considered ideal conditions for productivity by the CAFO corporations, though the inhumanity and environmental problems caused by these operations are staggering.

But why this interest in bovines? Surprisingly, cows and other livestock animals produce about 36% of Earth's methane emissions by both burping and breaking wind, with 90% to 95% of their methane (CH₄) emitted by the burps. Since there are over 1.5 billion cows worldwide, about 28.9 million in the United States in 2021 and 29,000 in New Jersey, according to various sources, their burps—about one per cow every 90 seconds—add up.

A cow burps between 250 to 500 liters of methane a day or roughly 137,000 liters a year. Worldwide, cows release about 120 million metric tons

of methane per year. Methane can last in the atmosphere for 12 years and is responsible for around 30% of the current rise in global temperature, according to the International Energy Agency. Despite its short lifetime, methane has 80 times the warming power of CO₂.

But burping is just part of the problem. Depending on its size, a cow weighing 1,000 pounds also expels about 60 pounds of manure a day, or about 23,000 pounds a year. The US Department of Agriculture estimates that livestock and poultry operations in this country produce as much as 1.4 billion tons of manure each year! When properly composted, manure is a beneficial fertilizer containing nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) in a 3-2-1 ratio and labeled as (NPK). Manure also contains micro-nutrients, such as boron and sulfur.

CAFO livestock, penned together by the thousands, generate so much waste that it is often stored in vast "lagoons." The waste is then spread on fields, releasing methane in the process. Due to industry's shift to even larger dairy and hog operations, methane emissions from manure leapt by 68% between 1990 and 2019. But untreated or improperly composted manure can drain into nearby vegetable fields, underground water tables, and waterways, spreading dangerous pathogens, such

"Burping is just part of the problem. Depending on its size, a cow weighing 1,000 pounds also expels about 60 pounds of manure a day, or about 23,000 pounds a year."

as bacteria, protozoa, and viruses. CAFOs also can create other serious problems besides burping and pooping. The Sentience Institute estimates that CAFOs produce 70.0% of US beef, 99.9% of chicken, 99.8% of turkey, and 98.3% of pork. This means health violations in a CAFO could trigger health and even life-threatening regional—or worse—nationwide problems.

A measure of how big these CAFOs can be is when 18,000 head of dairy cows died April 10 in an explosion and fire at a CAFO south of Amarillo, Texas. The dairy was about 10 times larger

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ExCom Meeting Highlights

March: Sia Satish and Parker Weiss were appointed to the Youth Committee; George Moffatt was appointed to the Offshore Wind Committee. The ExCom voted unanimously to approve the list of candidates for Chapter endorsement in the state Legislature and municipal elections this year (see page 1 story).

April: Leila Marcovici was appointed to the Legislative Committee; Florence Abrenica was appointed to the Offshore Wind Committee. A Strategic Planning Committee was created and appointed to that committee were Chapter Chair Rich Isaac, NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot, Paul Sanderson, Judy Minot, Renée Pollard, Jim Andreano, Seth Kantor, and Joe Testa. The ExCom voted to support a lawsuit fighting the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's approval of the Regional Energy Access Expansion pipeline project, which involves several new or expanded gas compressor stations in New Jersey. Members of the new Warehouse Committee were introduced: Gary Frederick, Stan Greberis, (co-chairs), Kip Cherry, Laura Lynch, Tony Hagen, Yvette Viasus, Abbas Salim, Denise Brush, and Pat Hilliard. A mission statement and goals for the committee were approved.

May: Alicia Remus was appointed Chapter translator and will reach out to Latino news organizations to coordinate on Club objectives, among other initiatives. Winston Kim was appointed to the Youth Committee. A motion supporting creation of the Hudson Canyon Marine Sanctuary was approved unanimously. The ExCom unanimously approved a resolution opposing the use of artificial turf, owing to its numerous harmful properties including toxic chemical content. Sierra Club members who are interested in political fundraising are urged to reach out to Political Committee Chair Karen Becker at political.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Support Your Passion for a Just and Sustainable World

Create a legacy that protects and restores the natural world for future generations by naming Sierra Club's New Jersey Chapter in your will or trust. Or, name Sierra Club Foundation as a beneficiary of your retirement plan for the benefit of your local New Jersey Chapter and leave less highly taxed assets to your loved ones.



To learn more about the advantages of making a planned gift and to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please contact us.



Julia Curtis • (800) 932-4270 • giftplanning@sierraclub.org • myplan.sierraclub.org



On the Trail

Good Hiking by the Mullica

By Tom Boghosian • tfboghosian44@gmail.com



Wharton State Forest offers a variety of hiking trails, with major trailheads at both Atsion in Shamong Township and Batsto Village in Washington Township. Sierra Club hikers enjoyed a number of these this past winter—primarily out of Batsto Village—but we did not exhaust all the possibilities.

There is something for everyone.

Trailheads adjacent to Batsto's main parking area offer well-blazed loop trails 1, 2, or 4 miles long and glimpses of geese and kayakers out on Batsto River and Batsto Lake. There is also quick access to the 50-plus mile Batona Trail, running between Bass River State Forest and Ong's Hat in the Brendan T. Byrne State Forest.



The Mullica River is an ideal place to wet a toe from the gunwale of a boat or explore New Jersey's back country. Credit: Tom Boghosian

shoulder-high or better. Various fungi grow at ground level and from tree trunks on either side of the burn area.

A short walk south on the Batona Trail takes you to the newly blazed Sand and Water Trail (0.87 miles) and the 1808 Trail (1.6 miles). The trails can be combined with a connecting trail to make a 6-mile loop hike. There are many well-maintained bridges to take you through Mordecai Swamp and along the 1808 Trail to old Crowleystown (now Buttonwood Hill Campground). The tall cedars make it hard to believe that this whole area had once been clear-



cut for mast making and furniture for sale up and down the Atlantic via the very close-at-hand Mullica River.

Remnants of the area's iron and glassmaking history are readily visible in Batsto Village. It's worth the walk to check out the skeleton of a barge boat used to mine bog iron from the river, visit the man-

sion, or see a lumber mill powered by a race (fast-moving current of water) off the Batsto River—and lots more. The road through the village also takes you to the yellow-blazed Mullica River Trail where you can wander beside the waterway and return via Batsto River Road to get a view of two waterways in one trip.

There is a lot to do in a relatively small area.

BOVINE BURPS

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than the average Texas dairy herd and was authorized to hold up to 32,000 head. A Castro County sheriff said the fire likely resulted from overheated equipment that ignited a methane buildup.

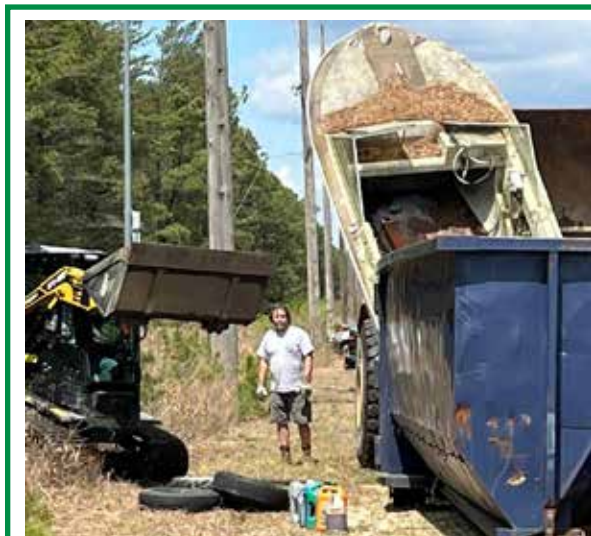
Although there are only two CAFOs registered in New Jersey, in January, US Sen. Cory Booker reintroduced a bill that includes strengthening the Packers and Stockyards Act. This would crack down on monopolistic practices of multinational meatpackers and corporate integrators and

place a moratorium on CAFOs.

Because of the many environmental and health threats CAFOs pose, including the inhumane housing conditions for these animals, many organizations oppose CAFOs, including the Sierra Club. The organization has issued a position paper, a cleverly named “[Bull-sheet](#),” and a comprehensive critique calling for CAFOs to be shut down.

Resource:

Sierra Club information on CAFOs: <https://bit.ly/4OAS76n>



A “boatload” of trash is hauled out of the Pinelands. Kenny Pannone helps with removal during a cleanup in Forked River followed by a barbecue at the firehouse.

Credit: Joanne Pannone

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

New Jersey Is Making Progress With EV Sales

By Bill Beren • Transportation Committee Chair



Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill (far left), Bill Beren (center), Essex County Freeholder Brendan Gill (far right), and other local officials promote electric school buses at the Montclair Drive Electric Earth Day Festival.

Drive Electric Earth Day: Gateway, Skylands, and Loantaka groups either organized or participated in the Drive Electric Earth Day program in April where owners of electric vehicles (EVs) brought their cars to promote clean transportation. Gateway's event at Montclair included 25 vehicles ranging from high-end BMWs and a Polestar to Chevy Bolts and Kias, an electric school bus, and a trailer full of ebikes. Over 100 people came by to talk to the owners. The bad news is that GM has announced that it is discontinuing production of the Chevy Bolt to concentrate its efforts on building electric SUVs, as the profit margin is higher for those vehicles.

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reports that as of December 2022, there were 91,515 EVs registered in New Jersey (including both battery electric and plug-in hybrids), up from just 338 ten years earlier! A generous set of financial incentives has helped stimulate demand for these vehicles, so much so that the state had to close its 2022-2023 incentive program early due to high demand that exceeded its budget. It is expected that funds will be available once again in July with the new fiscal year budget. A list of all the available grants and incentives is summarized in our NJ Chapter flyer on [state and federal incentives](#) for electric passenger vehicles. This document will be updated as the incentives change, so check it online when you begin your search to buy or lease an EV. The state has also announced a program, relying on federal grant money under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), to roll out electric charging stations along the major transportation corridors in the state, including its interstate highways and the Garden State Parkway.

Electric School Buses: The Transportation Committee continues to actively promote the replacement of the state's fleet of diesel school buses with zero emission electric school buses. We know of two private school bus fleets that have these in operation—Student Transportation of America has five buses running in Lawrence Township, and Belair Transport in the Oranges is in the process of putting all seven of their buses on the road. Jersey City School District's fleet of five buses is also in the final stages of deployment.

This is a small percentage of the 77 buses originally funded between February 2019 and October 2021. We are therefore concerned that the state grant process that funds these buses needs

to be streamlined. In concert with the Clean Cities Coalition, we are re-searching how to speed up the process and hope to work with the DEP to



eliminate the speed bumps. Grants for an additional 124 buses were announced in August 2022 and March 2023.

This spring, the Sierra Club will promote new funding cycles by both the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), under President Biden's IJIA, and NJDEP under the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and the state's new Electric School Bus Program, which was largely written by the Transportation Committee and signed by the governor in August. New Jersey will split \$37 million dollars in federal grant funds allocated to EPA Region 2 with New York and Puerto Rico. We will also sponsor events in Atlantic City (June 12 at the Atlantic County Utilities Authority facility), Asbury Park (June 7 at the Asbury Park Library) and Jersey City (June 21 at Lincoln Park) to publicize the federal and state grant programs to local school districts.

In addition to electric school buses, the state is also using RGGI funds to pay for electric garbage trucks, fire engines, airport and port equipment, NJ Transit buses, and other heavy and medium duty vehicles and support



A van full of ebikes available for test drives at the Montclair Drive Electric Earth Day Festival.

equipment. [More information on electric school buses](#) can be found on our electric school bus webpage.

New Jersey Transit Issues: NJ Transit is slowly making progress toward electrifying its fleet of buses. One electric bus is now in passenger service in Camden County, to be followed by seven others. The agency received federal grant money to build a new bus depot in Hudson County that will support a fleet of electric buses. However, no progress has been announced by the agency regarding its plans to redesign the bus routes in Essex and Hudson counties, or in South Jersey.

Advanced Clean Truck and Advanced Clean Cars II: The Sierra Club is lobbying for the state to apply the Advanced Clean Trucks rule, starting in 2025, and adopt Advanced Clean Cars II. These two California vehicle standards would help electrify the transportation sector, which generates 40% of the state's greenhouse gases. These standards were developed by the California Air Resources Board and require an increasingly larger percentage of EV sales for cars, trucks, and buses between now and 2035.

Resources

Flyer on EV incentives: bit.ly/3NxcuCIH
NJ Chapter webpage on E-school bus funding and incentives: bit.ly/3Lu0YkT

ELECTRIFICATION

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Amann said the Dutch track the depth, direction, and speed of the various underground aquifer flows near each building and use that to their advantage.

New Jersey's Stockton University has adopted an ATEs model. During the winter, the school pumps groundwater to the surface, where it chills, and then returns it to an underground storage zone. This is available for cooling buildings during the summer.

Alan P. then reviewed design decisions for his all-electric four-story 4,300-square-foot "beach house." He discussed the value of the Tesla solar tile roof and the challenges with maximizing solar roof coverage to reach net zero. His design includes four

Tesla Powerwalls (batteries) to provide backup. He stated, "We have not yet built our house, but there's been a lot of thought into making this house completely electric and able to go 100% off-grid."

See <https://qrd.by/y8noi> for an index of all webinar dates, recordings, slides, and Q&As, and sign up for future announcements of future Building Electrification Team webinars.

Pat and Steve Miller are cofounders of the NJ 50 x 30 Building Electrification Team. Steve Miller is the building electrification issues coordinator for the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. Email the authors at stevemiller@comcast.net and patmiller@comcast.net

A variety of Club books, notecards, badges and clothing is available from www.sierraclub.org/store



GROUP OUTINGS COORDINATORS

Chapter Outings Chair: Leona Fluck leona@pineypaddlers.com, (609) 259-3734

Skylands: Dave Alcock, dwhoob@hotmail.com

Hunterdon Warren: Jonathan Wall jonwall@jonwall.com

North Jersey: Co-Chairs: *Open Position!* and Mary Walsh, north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Gateway: Co-Chairs: Steven Yafet, syafet@gmail.com and Ron Pate, ronpate31@verizon.net, 973-965-7578

Hudson Co.: Steve Krinsky, stevkrinsky@comcast.net

Loantaka: Kevin O'Brien, kbkob@aol.com

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Raritan Valley: John Miraglia, johnworks3@aol.com S. Pasricha, spjersey@gmail.com; Bernadette Maher

Jersey Shore: *Open Position!*

Ocean County: *Open Position!*

West Jersey: *Open Position!*

South Jersey: Tom Boghosian, tfboghossian44@gmail.com

Singles Section: *Open Position!*

LGBTQ+ Section: Wanda Ashbrook, pridegrlnj@gmail.com

Inspiring Connections Outdoors: Oscar Nazar chair.njico.sierraclub@gmail.com

River Touring: Fred Tocce, (908) 453-2205 (H) RD-1, Box 277, Washington 07882

Outing Leaders and Group Outings Coordinators:

Please send write-ups for October to December 2023 to your group outings coordinator (or, if you don't associate yourself with a single group, directly to leona@pineypaddlers.com) before August 1, 2023. Outings for early January 2024 can also be included.

NOTES ON OUTINGS: Outings are generally open to Club members, guests, and anyone interested. Unless otherwise specified, the events are free. All participants in Sierra Club outings must sign liability waivers. Please check with the leader before bringing small children on an outing. A parent or other responsible adult must accompany persons under 18. Participants may bring pets on outings only if the event description specifically says pets are allowed.

Sierra Club outings are arranged and conducted by volunteer leaders who are responsible for the safety, welfare, and enjoyment of all participants. Leaders determine qualifications to participate, adequacy of equipment, routes to be followed, and special precautions to be taken. Please arrive adequately prepared and equipped. If you have any allergies, please remember to bring your medication. The leader has the final word in the

conduct of the trip. Your cooperation will help ensure a safe and pleasant outing.

Please arrive early at the meeting place so the outing can start on time. For day hikes, lunch, water (at least a liter), extra clothing, rain gear, and emergency equipment should be carried in a small daypack. For all except easy hikes, sturdy over-the-ankle shoes or boots should be worn. For most trips, you are expected to have your own equipment. In some cases, it may be rented from outdoor/camping suppliers—call or message the trip leader for more information. If the weather is questionable on the date of the outing, you may assume that it will take place, unless the hike description indicates otherwise.

Unless registration is required, or if you have a question, it is not necessary to contact the leader before the trip. However, as these outings are planned many months in advance, we do advise that you contact the trip leader one to two days before the outing to make sure it is not canceled.

Watercraft trips let you experience the unspoiled parts of our region, but water safety does impose special requirements. The size and skill of each participant must be appropriate to each water excursion, so participation is at the discretion of the leader. We ask you to register at least one week in advance. Unless a phone number is provided, please send an email with an honest assessment of your paddling experience, your phone number, and any questions you may have. You will receive a description of the trip, with directions, where you can rent a canoe or kayak, and what you will need to bring. Unless stated otherwise, rental boats are available, trips do not require advanced paddling skill or exceptional physical conditioning, public transportation is not available, nonmembers may participate, and responsible smokers are welcome.

If you are a Sierra Club member interested in becoming an outing leader or have suggestions for new outings, contact your group outings chair or the Chapter outings chair for assistance and further information. The Chapter group or section leading each outing is given at the end of the write-up, as follows:

Atlantic Chapter, ACOC; Central Jersey, C; Gateway, G; Jersey Shore, JS; LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, Queer, Plus); Loantaka, L; NJ Chapter, NJ; North Jersey, N; Raritan Valley, RV; Ocean, O; River Touring, RT; Singles Section SS; Skylands, Sk; South Jersey, S; West Jersey, W.

JUNE

June 21 (Wed): Summer Solstice Hike at Wawayanda State Park (Sussex/Passaic Cos.) 4 p.m., 3 miles, easy pace. We will hike around Laurel Pond. Bring a picnic dinner to enjoy by the lake in the picnic area. Meet at the Lake Day Use Area parking lot, 885 Warwick Tpk., Hewitt. Look for the Rainbow flags. Park website link: bit.ly/3nL-uqV Leader: Wanda A., pridegrlnj@aim.com (LGBTQ+)

June 21 (Wed): Summer Solstice Hike at St. Michael's Preserve (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m. 3-4 miles, easy pace. The official beginning of summer is at 10:58 a.m.! The highlight of our solstice walk will be the recently installed J Seward Johnson II 70-ft. wide monumental sculpture "The Awakening." St. Michael's Preserve is over 400 acres of

farm fields and forests on the edge of Hopewell Borough, the Raritan Valley region. D&R Greenway was successful in purchasing the land through a public/private partnership. Bring water and snacks. Leashed dogs are permitted. Heavy rain cancels. Preregistration is required. The meeting location will be sent to registrants the week of the hike. Option for lunch at a local restaurant. Co-leaders: Sindhu P., spjersey@gmail.com and George and Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com (RV)

JULY

July 1 (Sat): Eagle Rock Reservation Family Hike (Essex Co.) Meet before 10 a.m., easy pace. We will hike 4-5 miles, identifying trees as we go. Children 8 years and older are welcome. Wear hiking boots. Bring water and snacks. No dogs please. Meet at the main entrance of the Essex County 9/11 Memorial, Prospect Avenue and Eagle Rock Avenue, West Orange. There are facilities. Rain cancels. Leader: Ron Pate, 973-965-7578 or Ronpate31@verizon.net (G)

July 2 (Sun): Walk at Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. We'll begin our visit at the Nature Center and "slither on in" to the Reptile Room. Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge consists of 171 acres of protected Green Acres Pinelands habitat. Cedar Run features about 3 miles of trails for a leisurely stroll around the lake and offers the option for a longer walk into the forest. The Wildlife Housing Area is the highlight of any visit with nearly 60 resident owls, eagles, vultures, raccoons, turtles and more! Admission: adults (13+) \$10, children (4-12) \$5. Address: 4 Sawmill Rd, Medford. For directions: www.cedarrun.org/visit/location-directions/ Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Pets are not permitted. Preregistration is required. Leaders: George and Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com (W)

July 8 (Sat): Harriman State Park Hike and Swim, Sloatsburg, NY (Orange Co.) 10 a.m., 7 miles in 4 hours in moderately hilly terrain. Facilities: a portable toilet at the parking lot. Requirements: hiking boots, backpack. Bring a daypack with water and lunch. No pets. Register at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar Directions will be sent via email to those who register. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, the_hikist@mac.com, and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

July 9 (Sun): Hike at Harriman State Park Sloatsburg, NY (Orange Co.) This **all-inclusive** hike is being conducted jointly by leaders of the Chapter's LGBTQ+ Section and the North Jersey Sierra Group: 11 a.m., moderate pace. We will hike a 5-6 mile loop along the Pine Meadow Trail to Pine Meadow Lake, where we will stop to rest and eat snacks. In total, this will take around 3-4 hours. We will park and meet at the Reeves Meadow Visitor Center, which has a tiny parking lot, although most will probably have to park along Seven Lakes Dr. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Hiking boots are recommended. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Rebecca Wilkin, rebeccawilkin@gmail.com (North), and Wanda, pridegrlnj@aim.com (LGBTQ+)

July 13 (Thurs): A Nature Trail Walk at the Manasquan Reservoir (Monmouth Co.) 10 a.m. 3 miles, easy pace. The Blue Reservoir Trail is wide, flat/easy with a crushed rock surface. Meet at the accessible Environmental Center, 331 Georgia Tavern Road, Howell. We'll tour exhibits and learn about wildlife protection before walking north to the small dike area and back to the center to walk the Cove Trail, a 1-mile pedestrian trail through woods and wetlands. We return to the center on the Blue Trail and then drive to the visitor's center to have our lunch on the deck along the reservoir. After lunch option: walk the blue trail to the main dam area. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Facilities are available. Rain cancels. Preregistration is required. Leashed dogs are welcome. Co-leaders: Sindhu P., spjersey@gmail.com, and Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com (RV)

July 19 (Wed): Canoe/Kayak at Lake Mercer in Mercer Park (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m. It's National Hot Dog Day! Paddle the 365-acre lake and explore Assunpink Creek upstream. We'll see **blue herons** fishing at the water's edge and perhaps a **bald eagle** flying overhead. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Meet at the marina boat ramp parking lot where we will unload and launch our boats. Rental boats are not available in the morning. Preregistration is required. Rain cancels. George & Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com (C)

July 28 (Fri): Family Hike at The Watershed Institute (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. We'll walk the new accessible Hickory Loop boardwalk trail, which connects to the Blue Trail. The Blue Trail takes us around field edges and through forest paths with some elevations as we continue to Wargo Pond and the dock overlook. The trail may be muddy in places; wear appropriate footwear. Meet at 31 Titus Mill Road, Pennington. There are facilities. Leashed dogs are permitted. Rain cancels. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. After lunch we'll visit the Watershed Center's live exhibits and the Butterfly House. Preregistration is required. Co-leaders: George and Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com, and Joanne P., jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com (C)

AUGUST

Aug 4 (Thurs): Hike at Smith's Woods and Smithville Park (Burlington Co.) 10 a.m. 3-4 miles, easy pace. International Beer Day! The Smith's Woods trails are flat and well maintained, with wooden steps and boardwalks over wet areas. The Smithville Park forest hiking trails have elevations, small bridges over high sections, and a floating walkway over Smithville Lake. Meet at the Smith's Woods access parking lot, East Railroad Ave. Bring water and snacks; hiking poles are recommended. Leashed dogs are welcome. Facilities are available. Preregistration is required. Rain cancels. Option: late lunch at the Vincentown Diner. Leaders: George & Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com (W)

Aug 9 (Wed): Hike at Davidson's Mill Pond Park (Middlesex Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. We begin our hike on the Yellow Trail, a grassy/rocky section through the woods that includes narrow boardwalks over swampy areas. The forested Blue Trail has elevations, exposed roots to step over, and large stones for steps in some sections. Hiking poles and good footwear are recommended. Bring water and snacks. Option for late lunch at a local restaurant. Leashed dogs are welcome. Portable toilet at parking lot. Rain cancels. Preregistration is required. Co-leaders: Sindhu P., spjersey@gmail.com, and Leona F., leona@pineypaddlers.com (RV)

Aug 12 (Sat): Family Nature Hike at Eagle Rock Reservation (Essex Co.) Meet before 10 a.m., easy pace. We will hike 4-5 miles exploring various native plants, animals, and insects. Children 8 years and older are welcome. Wear hiking boots. Bring water and snacks. No dogs please. Meet at the main entrance of the Essex County 9/11 Memorial, Prospect and Eagle Rock Avenues, West Orange. There are facilities. Rain cancels. Leader: Ron Pate, 973-965-7578 or Ronpate31@verizon.net (G)

Aug 12 (Sat): Trail Walk at Tenafly Nature Center (Bergen Co.) 10 a.m., slow/moderate pace. Open to everyone, including families with children! We will walk the trails at the nature center for approximately 60 minutes. The walk may be guided by an expert, so this could be a good opportunity to learn about native and invasive species in the area (guide not confirmed yet). Address: 313 Hudson Ave, Tenafly. There are facilities at the center. Bring water and snacks. No dogs allowed. Rain cancels. Leader: Rebecca Wilkin, rebeccawilkin@gmail.com (N)

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OUTINGS continued from page 7

Aug 12 (Sat): Terrace Pond Hike, West Milford (Sussex Co.) 10 a.m., 7 miles in 4 hours in moderately hilly terrain. No facilities. Requirements: hiking boots, backpack. Bring a daypack with water and lunch. No pets. Register at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar. Directions will be sent via email to those who register. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, the_hikist@mac.com, and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

Aug 20 (Sun): Summer at Grounds For Sculpture (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m. Grounds For Sculpture (GFS) was founded by artist and philanthropist Seward Johnson. It opened in 1992 on the site of the former NJ State Fairgrounds. The Van Gogh Café and the Peacock Café are available for lunch. No outside food permitted. Water is allowed. Advance timed ticket reservations are **required** to ensure entry. Open rain or shine. Tickets are available up to two weeks in advance: www.groundsforsculpture.org/about/. Preregistration is required. Look for us with the Sierra Club banner outside the Welcome Center. Co-leaders: Leona and George F., leona@pineypaddlers.com, and Joanne P., jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com (C)

SEPTEMBER

Sept 9 (Sat): Wanaque Ridge Hike, Wanaque (Passaic Co.) 10 a.m., 7 miles in 4 hours in moderately hilly terrain. Features: Ramapo Lake and Wanaque Ridge lookouts. Facilities: Restroom at ballfield near parking lot. Requirements: hiking boots, backpack. Bring a daypack with water and lunch. No pets. Register at www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar. Directions will be sent via email to those who register. Leaders: Jimi Oleksiak, the_hikist@mac.com, and Jerry Ruocco (SS)

Sept 9 (Sat): Eagle Rock Reservation Trail Cleanup and Maintenance (Essex Co.) Meet before 10 a.m. We will perform trail maintenance along trails clearing brush and improving trails. Wear hiking boots. Bring water and snacks. Meet at the main entrance of the Essex County 9/11 Memorial, Prospect Avenue and Eagle Rock Avenue, West Orange. There are facilities. We will provide gloves and equipment. Leader: Ron Pate, 973-965-7578 or Ronpate31@verizon.net (G)

Sept 10 (Sun): Cloverdale Farm County Park Nature Walk (Ocean Co.) 11 a.m., 2 miles. The Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund Program acquired Cloverdale Farm in 2004. Within the boundaries of this 90-acre park, we find the diversity and beauty of the Pine Barrens wetlands, uplands, and the 20 acres of cranberry bogs all year long. Address: 34 Cloverdale Rd, Barnegat. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Preregistration is required. George and Leona F., Leona@pineypaddlers.com (O)

Sept 16 (Sat): Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (Morris Co.) 12 p.m., flat easy/moderate hike. There are trails and boardwalks in certain areas. The refuge is particularly good for birding and wildlife observation and more in different habitats. Website: bit.ly/3BgfPus Meet at the Wildlife Observation Center (WOC), 220 Long Hill Road, Long Hill Twp. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Hiking boots are recommended. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: RSVP with Wanda, pridegrlnj@aim.com, or Rebecca Wilkin, rebeccawilkin@gmail.com (LGBTQ+)

Sept 24 (Sun): Batsto Village Fall Antique Glass & Bottle Show and Sierra Club Yellow Trail Hike (Atlantic Co.) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Sierra Club participants meet at 10 a.m. This show is a great family event with wagon rides for the little ones. Bring water and snacks and enjoy the many food vendors as well. After a midday break, those interested will ramble along the Mullica River Trail to Constable Bridge and return to the Village via Batsto River Road, about 5 miles in all. Meet at Batsto Village Visitor Center parking lot, 31 Batsto Rd, Hammonton. Preregistration is required. There are facilities. Leashed dogs are welcome. Co-leaders: Tom Boghosian, fboghosian44@gmail.com, and Leona F., Leona@pineypaddlers.com (SJ)

OCTOBER

Oct 1 (Sun): Richard J. Coffee Mercer County Park Hike (Mercer Co.) 10 a.m., 3-4 miles, easy pace. National Pumpkin Spice Day! We will hike along Mercer Lake and walk the woods trails. Nearby is the John Rogers House, built in 1761, which is now an open-air, reconstructed ruin adapted for interpretation. Bring a beverage, lunch, and snacks. Leaders will have Pumpkin Spice cookies! Leashed dogs are welcome. Meet at Grandparents Grove, which is next to the Boathouse Marina on 334 S. Post Rd. There are facilities. Rain cancels. Preregistration is required. Co-leaders: Joanne Pannone, jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com, and Leona F., Leona@pineypaddlers.com (C)

Oct 7 (Sat): Hacklebarney State Park (Morris Co.) 12 p.m., 4-5 miles, moderate hike. The Black River gorge, woodlands, and trails provide a great escape for walkers and hikers. Some of the trails have hills, and there are a few river bridges to cross to reach other parts of this park. This is a lovely fall hike. Website: bit.ly/3nPOIDA Meet at 119 Hacklebarney Rd., Long Valley. There are facilities. Bring water, snacks, and lunch. Hiking boots are recommended. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: RSVP with Wanda, pridegrlnj@aim.com, or Rebecca Wilkin, rebeccawilkin@gmail.com (LGBTQ+)



There are 12 regional groups in the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club. All groups have open officer positions for volunteers and welcome new members. Interested persons should reach out to the contacts listed below. Participation in the Sierra Club is a meaningful and rewarding way to give back to your community and help create a sustainable and healthier environment for all.

Groups are listed in rough geographical sequence: North to South

SKYLANDS GROUP (Sussex and Northern Warren counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/skyland
Facebook: www.facebook.com/SkylandsNJSC
Email: chachabacon@yahoo.com; phone: 973-886-7950

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and other OFFICERS (ExCom members are elected to serve 2-year terms; term-expiry date in parentheses)

Chair (12/31/24)	Greg Gorman	chachabacon@yahoo.com
Vice Chair (12/31/23)	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
Secretary (12/31/24)	Norene Haberski	norenehaberski2@gmail.com
Treasurer (12/31/24)	Norene Haberski	norenehaberski2@gmail.com
ExCom at large (12/31/23)	Dave Alcock	dwhoob@hotmail.com
	(12/31/24)	Nicole Guerrieri
	(12/31/23)	Allison Orsi
	(12/31/24)	Jill Aquino
	(12/31/23)	Chris Dunbar
	(12/31/23)	Joanne Morgan
Conservation Chair	Greg Gorman	chachabacon@yahoo.com
Outings Chair	Dave Alcock	dwhoob@hotmail.com
Outreach Chair	Joanne Morgan	jojommorgan@yahoo.com
Environmental Justice	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
Political Co-Chairs	Nicole Guerrieri	SierraClubNicole@gmail.com
	Susan Williams	SkylandsGroup@gmail.com
Publicity Chair	Joanne Morgan	jojommorgan@yahoo.com
Recycling/Zero Waste	Jill Aquino	jdaiftimeforchange@gmail.com
Chair Webmaster	Nicole Guerrieri	SierraClubNicole@gmail.com

GENERAL MEETINGS (Conducted via Zoom)

The Skylands Group of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club serves Sussex and Northern Warren counties. We offer a variety of opportunities for the public to learn about and connect with the natural environment. We present informative films and speakers; exploration of the great outdoors on hikes, edible-plant tours, and picnics; public outreach via town tabling; and visits to schools. Our hope is to foster love and deep respect for our great outdoors.

The Skylands Group works with grassroots organizations to protect open spaces and water quality, promote clean energy, and oppose privatization of public trust resources.

CURRENT CAMPAIGNS: The Skylands Group advocates the protection of the Sparta Mountain Wildlife Management Area from logging done under the guise of creating "healthy forests" and opposes the proposed Tennessee Gas Pipeline compressor station in Wantage.

The Skylands Group supports the Green New Deal, Sunrise Movement, and transition toward a clean energy economy.

The Skylands Group also opposes the Munsonhurst Planned Residential District development, which will adversely affect the ecology of a Natural Heritage Priority Site.

HUNTERDON WARREN GROUP

(Hunterdon and Southern Warren counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren

Meetup: www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/sierraclub.hunterdonwarren/

YouTube: www.youtube.com/@sierraclubhunterdonwarren9255/videos

OFFICERS

Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Vice Chair	Celeste Martin *	celeste.martin@sluhn.org
Conservation Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Political Co-Chairs	Karen Becker *	karbecker@gmail.com
	Amy Weeder *	aweeder@comcast.net
Outings	Ron Gelok*	gelokron@gmail.com
Treasurer, Secretary	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Warren County Issues	Pat Banes *	patrick_banes@comcast.net
Webmaster/Listmaster	John Kashwick	jkashwick@gmail.com
ExCom at Large	Jonathan D. Wall	docjdwall@gmail.com

* Group Executive Committee Member

GENERAL MEETINGS: Meetings may be virtual or hybrid (in-person and virtual). Please check www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/hunterdonwarren for updates or to register for events. Registered participants will receive Zoom meeting information.

June 7 (Wed): 7 p.m. Master Gardener's Presentation – Rebecca Magron from the Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) of Hunterdon County will give a presentation on master gardening tips. Rebecca is a Horticultural Consultant and Research Associate with RCE. She, along with the more than 40 PhD members of the educational team have shared and delivered their expertise and hosted programs throughout New Jersey. Rebecca will share information about gardening for wildlife, instead of buying bird food, and planting native plants to feed the pollinators, which will in turn feed the birds. She will focus on plants that thrive in Hunterdon County. This event is hybrid: in-person at the North Hunterdon County Library in Clinton and virtually on Zoom.

CURRENT ISSUES

Warehouse Projects: There are several massive warehouse projects proposed for Hunterdon and Warren counties. Please consider representing our group at local, county and state meetings which may consider granting permits for these projects.

Night Skies: The Hunterdon Warren Group and the Light Pollution and Dark Skies Committee (LPDSC) are encouraging municipalities to curb light pollution by introducing ordinances that encourage proper lighting. We need citizens to contact their environmental commissions, land use boards, and governing bodies to encourage them to support passing these energy- and tax-saving initiatives. Please help us in our campaign to have our county and local municipalities adopt stricter ordinances to reduce excessive light pollution. Contact the chair of the committee, Jonathan Wall at jonwall@jonwall.com if you are interested in this issue.

Are you familiar with your group's conservation campaigns? Call one of our group leaders and get involved!

NORTH JERSEY GROUP

(Bergen and Passaic counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/north-jersey

Meetup: www.meetup.com/NJSierraClub/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/northjerseysierraclub

Twitter: @sierraclub_nj

Instagram: sierraclubnorth_nj

OFFICERS

Co-Chair	Diane Scarangella*	diascat@hotmail.com
Co-Chair	Open Position!	
Treasurer	Bob Weiss*	bobweiss1967@gmail.com
Secretary	Ron De Vos	rondevos58@outlook.com
Political Action Committee Chair	Ron De Vos	rondevos58@outlook.com
Co-Chair	Open Position!	Contact Ron
Outings Committee		
Co-Chair	Rebecca Wilkin	rebeccawilkin@gmail.com
Co-Chair	Open Position!	Contact Mary or Diane at diascat@hotmail.com
Conservation Committee		
Co-Chair	Mary Walsh*	north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Co-Chair	Open Position!	Contact Mary or Diane at diascat@hotmail.com
Member	Judy Green*	jugreen547@gmail.com
Climate Change Committee Chair	Jeff Rapaport*	jefrap@optonline.net
Marketing/Social Media		
Co-Chair	Marie Mannino	mmannino@yahoo.com
Co-Chair	Open Position!	Contact Marie
Youth Outreach/Outings Chair	Erica Cowper*	ecowper22@gmail.com
Co-Chair	Rebecca Wilkin	rebeccawilkin@gmail.com
Outings Committee	Mary Mannino	north.outings.chair@newjersey.sierraclub.org
	or Diane Scarangella at diascat@hotmail.com	
Diversity, Inclusion, Environmental Justice		
Co-Chair	Bushra Asfare*	bushra_c.e@hotmail.com
Co-Chair	Open Position!	Contact Bushra
Special Events/Membership	Chair Position Open!	
Consulting Engineer	Bushra Asfare	bushra_c.e@hotmail.com
Event Planning and Membership Committee	Chair/Co-Chair Positions Open!	

*Elected North Jersey Group Executive Committee Member.

UPCOMING ACTIONS/EVENTS

We are seeking volunteer hike leaders! If you are interested in co-leading one of our LGBTQ+ and/or all-inclusive hikes, please let us know! **We need you!** Contact Diane Scarangella at diascat@hotmail.com or Wanda Ashbrook at pridegrlnj@aim.com for more information!

EVENTS

July 9 (Sun): Hike at Harriman State Park (Sloatsburg, NY) – This **all-inclusive** 5-6 mile hike is being conducted jointly by leaders of the NJ LGBTQ+ Section and of the North Jersey Sierra Group: 11 a.m., moderate pace. See the Outings and LGBTQ+ sections of this newsletter for more details.

July 17 (Mon): Climate Change and the Cost of Food: 7 p.m. on Zoom: Anyone who shops for food is aware that the cost of food has been going up. Contributing factors are erratic weather due to the changing climate, scarcity of water, and agricultural techniques. This presentation will focus on some of the changes that are needed in our agricultural system and the agricultural policies that could help facilitate these changes. Suggestions will be offered for actions we can take to advocate for changes in our own communities and in Congress that could help secure a more sustainable food system. Presented by Katherine Schwarz, a public health nutritionist who has taught about food security and food policy at Lehman College and at New York Medical College. **RSVP to get the zoom link:** diascat@hotmail.com

Aug 12 (Sat): Trail walk at Tenafly Nature Center (Tenafly, NJ): 10 a.m., See the Outings section of this newsletter for more details.

YOUTH Outreach

Composting and Food Sustainability: Anyone interested in composting/food sustainability is welcome to join our Zoom meetings! We are currently contacting school district administrators and researching grants/funding for composting initiatives in schools. Please reach out to rebeccawilkin@gmail.com if you'd like to join.

Slack Group for members of the Youth Outreach Committee: Join our youth Slack Group to find out more about environmental opportunities for students or if you have any questions. You can join it at bit.ly/3BHU8Uc or contact rebeccawilkin@gmail.com if you'd like to join.

Upcoming Meeting for High School Students, environmental leaders, and new volunteers. Dates/times to be determined. Contact Erica Cowper at ecowper22@gmail.com to join.

Preserving Open Spaces in Bergen and Passaic Counties: Contact Diascat@hotmail.com for more information about what you can do to preserve and/or restore open spaces and woodlands in Bergen/Passaic Counties. **Demand** the replanting of the 100+ trees in Overpeck Park Area IV and the creation of unpaved walking paths, and **Oppose** the creation of great lawns, paved walking paths, bike paths, and roadways in our natural habitats.

Protect the Climate: Contact Jeff at jefrap@optonline.net and keep your eye out for actions related to

- The Tennessee Gas pipeline upgrades in Sussex and Western Passaic County.
- The NJ Transit Gas backup plant in Kearney.
- The Passaic County Sewerage Commission's Back up Gas plant in Newark.
- Williams Transco Regional Energy Access Expansion project.
- The transportation of Liquefied Natural Gas through NJ from Pa. – Gibbstown Terminal.

NORTH JERSEY SIERRA GROUP INITIATIVES

The North Jersey Group is committed to coalition building. Our collaborative initiatives include

- Supporting renewable energy strategies and affordable housing;
- Opposing gas-fueled plants, the construction of pipelines and transport terminals, and use of tankers and trains to transport dirty fuels;
- Opposing commercialization and development of parkland and open spaces;
- Advocating for removal, not capping, of contaminated soil on public land and restoration of that land to its natural state;
- Advocating for polluted waterways cleanup and nonpolluting transport on NJ/NYC waterways;
- Supporting access to affordable healthcare;
- Increasing group diversity;
- Supporting environmental justice communities;
- Advocating for sound forest stewardship, maintenance of old growth forests, preservation of endangered species.

We continue to focus on fighting climate change; creating more opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy and appreciate nature; and collaborating with coalitions, such as Empower NJ, Don't Gas the Meadowlands, and other New Jersey Groups to advocate for renewable energy, a moratorium on fossil fuel usage, preservation of waterways, and protection of our parklands.

GATEWAY GROUP

(Hillside, Elizabeth, and Essex County, except for Livingston, Millburn, and Roseland)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Gateway/ (Also accessible from the NJ Chapter website)

Please also join the Gateway Group on **Facebook** at

www.facebook.com/pages/Gateway-Group-NJ-Sierra-Club/128998363842782

Please contact any of the leaders below if you are interested in joining our campaigns to protect the environment. There are several group officer positions open.

OFFICERS

Chair	Bill Beren*	973-746-9661	Beren1@verizon.net
Conservation Chair	Caroline Kane*	646-961-9003	ckane678@verizon.net
Treasurer	Rachel Tarzia*	908-531-2168	Rtarzia6@outlook.com
Program Co-Chairs	Suzanne Trimel*	973-509-8335	suzanne.trimel@gmail.com
	Steven Yafet	908-354-2537	syafet@gmail.com
Publicity Chair	Amanda Zhong	zhong.amanda@yahoo.com	
Political Chair	Claire Ciliotta	973-746-0438	ccili279@gmail.com
Fundraising Chair	Rachel Tarzia	908-531-2168	Rtarzia6@outlook.com
Membership Chair	Steven Yafet*	(see above)	
Passaic River Issues	Steven Yafet*	(see above)	
Outings Chair	Ron Pate		ronpate31@verizon.net
Webmaster	Christy Morganstein	732-718-4343	christy@medartsweb.com

*Group Executive Committee

The following Gateway Group positions are open for volunteers: vice-chair, secretary, Newark and Elizabeth issues, recycling. If you are interested, contact Bill Beren at 973-746-9661.

Please contact our program co-chairs if you have ideas or suggestions for a meeting-topic, program, or conservation project.

We invite YOU to join in our activism and ask your support as we strive to address the many issues facing our urban and suburban communities. Note the several vacant positions listed above.

EVENTS

Outings will be posted on the calendar on our Group's home page..

CONSERVATION NEWS

Our Drive Electric Earth Day event was successfully held on April 22 in Montclair. Visitors were able to view 25 electric vehicles, including an electric school bus. Also visiting the event was Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill and NJ Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Shawn LaTourette.

HUDSON COUNTY GROUP

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/udson-county

Email: HUDSONSIERRACLUB@gmail.com

Facebook: @HCSierraClub

Instagram: @HCSierraClub

Twitter: @HCSierraClub

OFFICERS

Chair	Patricia Hilliard*
Secretary/Treasurer	Rachel Ciekurs
Conservation Chair	Anne Arguelles
Political Chair	Ricardo Pereira*
Delegate to Chapter	Ricardo Pereira*
Membership	Meera Jaffery
Publicity	Spencer Rubino Finn
Outings / Events	Steve Krinsky*
At-Large	Nancy Booth*

(*ExCom)

Meeting Schedule: The Hudson Group will continue to meet remotely for now. Meetings are held four times a year. Members are welcome and encouraged to join the meetings. Contact us at HUDSONSIERRACLUB@gmail.com for details.

Upcoming Events: We are planning activities: nature walks, shoreline cleanups and public forums. We will also be doing political outreach. Check our online calendar, watch your email or find us on social media!

>continued on page 10

Current Campaigns: Please join in. We can use help with any of these:

Environmental Justice: Clean air for Hudson County! Low-income communities and black and brown communities suffer the most from environmental destruction: elevated levels of cancer, asthma and other respiratory disease from air pollution. Join us to oppose the widening of the NJ Turnpike Extension which will add more traffic and bad air to the community.

Liberty State Park: We support rallies called by the Friends of Liberty State Park. As part of our environmental justice campaign, we support the work on the interior of the park which will create 180 acres of wildlife habitat and 50 acres of active recreation for the community.

Skyway Park on the Hackensack River and Essex-Hudson Greenway: The Hudson County Group of the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club is working to support and expand green spaces in Hudson County. We want to connect existing parks and trails, as part of the Crossroads Campaign to connect greenways across Hudson County. Join up and learn how you can help.

Political Action: In preparation for upcoming elections in New Jersey, we plan to meet with sympathetic public officials. We support the Protecting Against Climate Threats Act (PACT), the Essex Hudson Greenway and the Clean Energy Equity Act. We support the efforts of the Don't Gas the Meadowlands coalition in support of renewable energy for NJ Transit. Let us know if you would like to join our campaigns.

LOANTAKA GROUP

(Morris and Union counties (except for Elizabeth and Hillside), plus Livingston, Milburn, and Roseland, approximately)

Contact: Allen Swanson, chair afswanson@newjersey.sierraclub.org
908-721-7014

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/loantaka

Facebook: www.facebook.com/LoantakaGroupNJSC

The Group participated in the Madison Drive Electric Day on April 19 and the New Providence Green Fair on April 22. Plans are developing for the Group's participation in a number of street fairs in our region.

We are in need of members who are interested in working on our political activities during this important state election year.

The Loantaka Group Climate Action Committee is continuing to develop the grassroots effort to expand the number of municipalities with Climate Action Plans.

Recently, Allen toured the Covanta Waste-to-Energy plant in Newark. The visit was extremely interesting. Allen plans to report on the visit soon.

CENTRAL JERSEY GROUP

(Mercer County and neighboring towns in adjoining counties)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/central-jersey Or find us from the NJ Chapter's website.

OFFICERS

Group Chair	Joanne Pannone	Jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
Group Vice Chair	Xiaoping Du	Du@yahoo.com
Secretary	Leona Fluck	Leona@Pineypaddlers.com
Treasurer	Arlene Ceterskiva	Va2c2015@gmail.com
Outings	George and Leona Fluck	Leona@Pineypaddlers.com
Programs	Joanne Pannone	Jpatmeadowbrook@gmail.com
Conservation Chair	Kip Cherry	Kipatthesierraclub@gmail.com
Recycling and Zero		
Waste Coordinator	Sylvia Kay	Sylviakay222@gmail.com
Trails	Dave Mattek	MattekDC@aol.com
Webmaster	Benjamin Steinberg	
Group Executive Committee Members	Joanne Pannone, Kip Cherry, Sylvia Kay	

Our meetings have been hybrid in-person/Zoom meetings held at the North Hunterdon County Library in Clinton, NJ, together with the Hunterdon Warren Group. Registered participants receive the Zoom meeting information. We covered topics such as **night skies-light pollution effects**, and the path to **nuclear fusion energy**. They are listed on the calendar on the Sierra Club's NJ Chapter website. We welcome your input and suggestions.

This Earth Day was celebrated with members doing a cleanup at Mercer County Park in West Windsor. A few members participated in a cleanup with the Pinelands at Bamber Lake/Forked River, where they filled a dumpster with bicycles, tires, mattresses, and a boat.

Hikes are listed in the calendar, and you can sign up online!

Central Group needs you to join us in volunteering to speak up for our environment. We have been participating in commentary at public meetings in Mercer County about proposed variances to change the use of preserved land and proposed building of warehouses. We have promoted legislation for funding of electric school buses, opposed the use of artificial turf, advocated for solar farms and wind farms, fought to curtail plastic pollution and pipeline construction. We have advocated for studies into the recent deaths of whales. We still need to fight for clean air and clean water. If you are interested in the NJ environment, please contact the NJ Chapter office.

RARITAN VALLEY GROUP

(Middlesex and Somerset counties and surrounding areas)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/raritan-valley

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RaritanGroupNJSC

Twitter: www.twitter.com/RaritanSierra

OFFICERS

Group Chair	S. Pasricha	spjersey@gmail.com
Conservation Chair	Gary Frederick	609-203-3382 garyfrederick@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Membership Chair	John Miraglia	johnworks3@aol.com
Political Co-Chairs	<i>Open Positions!</i>	
Publicity Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>	
Treasurer	S. Pasricha	spjersey@gmail.com
Co-Webmasters	<i>Open Positions!</i>	
Outings/Events Co-Chairs	John Miraglia, S. Pasricha, Bernadette Maher	
Student Liaisons	Varin Dharia, Jonah Segal	
Group Executive Committee Members	Gary Frederick*, S. Pasricha*, Teresa Callahan**, Kevin Corcoran**, and Bernadette Maher*	

*Jan 2023-Dec 2024

**Jan 2022-Dec 2023

Monthly membership meetings are typically held on the fourth Wednesday in New Brunswick. We discuss environmental issues (impacting Middlesex and Somerset), upcoming events, and volunteer efforts. See the webpage for our calendar of events.

The issues of interest to our communities include:

1. Opposition to new fossil fuel infrastructure;
2. Conservation, preservation and protection of the Raritan River Basin area; and,
3. Passage and enforcement of environmentally friendly ordinances.

NEWS FROM THE RARITAN VALLEY AREA

• FERC has approved the Regional Energy Access Expansion Project (REAE). They've stated that the Sierra Club's position that New Jersey and Pennsylvania do not need the gas is insufficient to deny the project, as other states may need (choose to burn) fracked gas energy. Seventy-four percent of the gas will flow through New Jersey.

The REAE project by Williams Transco proposes to expand compressor stations at Old Bridge (CS 207) in Middlesex County and at Neshanic Station, Branchburg (CS 505) in Somerset County. Liquid natural gas storage is also proposed at Neshanic Station. The Club, along with Food & Water Watch, has filed an appeal.

• The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) responded to the public comments given at Raritan Valley Community College regarding the REAE air permit. The DEP stated that the air pollutants will be negligible. See the DEP's gaslighting here: <https://bit.ly/3XwXLFg>

• **Northeast Supply Enhancement (NESE):** The DEP renewed Transco's Air Permit application for another 5 years (expires 2027). Williams has submitted an application to FERC for a 2-year extension for NESE

• **Keasbey, Woodbridge Township:** A fracked gas power plant is proposed to be constructed by Competitive Power Ventures. New Jersey no longer requires that power suppliers prove that energy projects are needed.

• **Old Bridge Township:** Woods along Route 9 South have been stripped to the bare earth to pave the way for new warehouses. Warehouses totaling more than 1.4 million square feet will be sited on 200 acres as part of a "warehouse park". The increase in truck traffic will raise air pollutant levels and congestion along Route 9.

• **A class action suit** is moving forward against Middlesex Water Company for Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) contamination. Residents in South Plainfield, Clark, Edison, Metuchen, Woodbridge, and Carteret are receiving water from alternate sources until the treatment facility can be brought up to code (estimated for June 2023).

• **The Raritan River** is increasingly flooding due to the climate crisis and fatal storms such as Tropical Storm Ida. The Department of Environmental Protection has proposed the Inland Flood Protection Rule to replace out-of-date flood maps from 1999. The regulations would raise elevations of the first floor of dwellings on new construction by 2 to 3 feet.

We encourage you to get involved by attending your town's planning and zoning board meetings. If you are aware of development proposals in your neighborhood that may have a negative environmental impact, please contact us and join our meetings.

JERSEY SHORE GROUP

(Monmouth County, approximately)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/Jersey-Shore/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/JerseyShoreNJSC/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/sierraclub_jerseyshore/?hl=en

OFFICERS

Group Chair	Dennis Anderson	732-970-4327	dennisaza@aol.com
	6 Maple Ave, Matawan NJ 07747		
Group Co-Chair	Stan Greberis	908-415-9060	grapefruit@msm.com
Secretary	Bob Grize		
Conservation Chair	Stan Greberis	908-415-9060	grapefruit@msm.com
Fundraising Co-Chair	Faith Teitelbaum	732-513-5445	faithtei@aol.com
Treasurer	Jim Baye		jimbaye@optonline.net
Political Co-Chairs	Robin and Harold Zullow		drzullow@optonline.net
Outings Chair	<i>Open Position!</i>		
Climate Chair	Steve Miller	732-671-5917	SteveMiller@Comcast.net
Letter-Writing Committee	Steve Miller	732-671-5917	SteveMiller@Comcast.net
	Stan Greberis	908-415-9060	grapefruit@msm.com
Program Chair	Lara Zullow		
Social Media Manager	Yvette Viasus		
Website Communications Manager	Chris Foley		ccffoley359@gmail.com

Open Postions!

Membership chair, high school coordinator, outings leaders

MEMBER MEETINGS

We present Zoom webinars, usually on the fourth Monday of every month at 7 p.m.

Speakers Contact: Mary Reilly, 908-731-2466 or Mary@reillygreen.com

If you are not getting emails announcing our webinars, please send one to Wael at waelkanj@gmail.com, or sign up at our webpage.

OCEAN COUNTY GROUP

Webpage: Meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Ocean-Group

OFFICERS

Chair and Treasurer	Laura Stone	LauraS36@yahoo.com
Political Chair	Margaret Mary Piccolo	gogreenp1@yahoo.com
Membership Chairs	Ray and Cathy Kozakerich	raykozak@comcast.net

Group ExCom Members	William Rodgers	
	Joyce Isaza	realtymstr@aol.com

Activities director, fundraising, publicity, and webmaster are all open positions!

ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES: Our group is focused on many critical issues. Locally and statewide we are fighting a myriad of overdevelopment problems. Along with our allies, we are working hard to save Barnegat Bay and The Pinelands, two natural gems in Ocean County.

The group is looking to build up its membership and welcomes new volunteers and people simply interested in getting outdoors. Interested persons should contact Ray and Cathy Kozakerich at raykozak@comcast.net

Ocean County Group works closely with the Barnegat Bay Partnership and meetings are held in their building in Toms River.

WEST JERSEY GROUP

(Camden, Gloucester, and Burlington counties, approximately)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/west-jersey
Facebook: www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC
Follow us on **Twitter** @Wjsierraclub and **Instagram** @wjsierraclub
Log on and Like Us!

OFFICERS

Group Chair	Gina Carola	856-848-8831	ginaceee@verizon.net
Vice-Chair	Denise Brush		denise.brush111@gmail.com
Secretary	Open Position!		
Treasurer	Trish Clements		patri3210@gmail.com
Publicity Chair	Anne Caridi		annecaridi@yahoo.com
Political Chair	Linda Rubiano		Linda_Maritza@yahoo.com
Greenways Coords.	Frank and Ellen Zinni		efzin4@aol.com
Conservation Chair	Stacey Ayala		thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com
Pinelands Rep	Jennifer Lande		jenuinel Lauren@outlook.com
Delegate at Large	Aida Ayala		thunderwolfgalaxy@yahoo.com
Membership Chair	Mike Brown	856-547-9221	eyebrown@verizon.net
Media & Communications	Tony Hagen		editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Open Positions! Call Gina to volunteer: 856-848-8831
Smart growth chair, programs chair, social media coordinators, outings chair.

GENERAL MEETINGS are held at 7:30 p.m. on the SECOND WEDNESDAY of ALTERNATE MONTHS, September thru May, via Zoom. You do not need Zoom software on your PC or Smartphone, just send an email to ginaceee@verizon.net to get an invitation and link to participate.

Sept 13: To be announced
This may be a Zoom meeting or may be in person at the Haddonfield Meeting or it could be a hybrid using both. If you would like to participate and are not already on our email reminder list, please send an email to Anne Caridi annecaridi@yahoo.com or Gina Carola ginaceee@verizon.net Or visit our Facebook page for the link to join the presentation. <http://www.facebook.com/WestJerseyGroupNJSC/>

The West Jersey Group does not meet in June, July, or August. Next meeting will be September 13.

In the meantime, you can join us on a hike.
<http://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/upcoming-outings>

Contact Gina to get involved in any of our many initiatives on climate change.

SOUTH JERSEY GROUP

(Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties, approximately)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/south-jersey

OFFICERS

Group, Outings Chair	Tom Boghosian	609-335-6907	tfboghosian44@gmail.com
Vice-Chair	Open Position!		
Conservation Chair	Open Position!		
Political Chair, Calendars	Dick Colby	609-965-4453	dick.colby@stockton.edu
Membership Chair	Open Position!		
Secretary/Treasurer	Julie Akers	609-432-3280	julieakers56@gmail.com
At Large	Allie Horn		

Tom Boghosian is an avid kayaker (certified as a Maine Guide!), both oceangoing and

in fresh waters, possibly willing to lead trips. Dick Colby is also an Atlantic County Parks Commissioner; contact him if you might be interested in attending monthly meetings of the Commission, which are open to the public. Julie Akers also works with Atlantic County Friends of the Parks, and is President of the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association.

Current Issues: (1) Ocean City (Cape May Co.) has been fighting both the siting of adjacent offshore wind turbines and the burying of power cables to bring the electricity onshore. An attempt to rally support (for wind energy) from the 65 Club members and supporters living in Ocean City has been unsuccessful! (2) We've been blue-blazing the southern portion of what will be a continuous footpath between the southern and northern tips of New Jersey, called the New Jersey Long Trail. Many others (and other groups) are contributing. Detailed maps and descriptions are now on the chapter website. Dick has also produced a brochure describing 15 historic walks in Egg Harbor City. Copies (electronic or paper) are available on request. (3) We continue to hope for Community Solar opportunities for each municipality in South Jersey.

SINGLES SECTION

(A chapter-wide special interest section offering hikes/cleanups, social gatherings, meetings, etc.)

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/sierra-singles

OFFICERS

Interim Co-Chairs	Ron Pate	ronpate31@verizon.net
	Jimi Oleksiak	The_Hikist@Mac.com

Executive Committee

Members Rozanna Fanelli, Ron Pate, and Jeff Sovelove

The Singles Section has a need for volunteers. Contact the officers if you would like to volunteer for any of the following: outings chair, conservation chair, treasurer, social chair, vice social chair, programs, publicity, membership, nominations.

We're a friendly, active group of individuals who enjoy hiking, biking, canoeing/kayaking, as well as a variety of social and cultural activities throughout the year. This section was created to offer a variety of singles-oriented activities to NJ Sierra Club members. See the Outings section in this issue for a list of upcoming hikes.

COMMUNICATIONS: The best way to be notified of upcoming singles events is to join our free listserv. Anyone may subscribe by going to: <https://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/NJ-SINGLES-NEWS.html> and clicking on "Join or leave the list." You may subscribe and unsubscribe at will; our events a few weeks before each event. Events are also list on the online calendar on the Chapter's web site: sierraclub.org/new-jersey. You can also "like" us on Facebook: "Singles Group New Jersey Sierra Club." Activities will also be posted on Meetup.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS:

Social dinners: Join us for dinner the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at a variety of restaurants in different locations. Jimi Oleksiak, the leader, will announce the details one week in advance through a listserv message. An RSVP will be required as described in the announcement.

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER (LGBTQ+) SECTION

Our mission is to support Sierra Club goals and to promote environmental activism and social equity. We are an inclusive section of the Sierra Club – all members of the LGBTQ+ community are invited to join us in any or all of the following events!

For more information or to help out, contact Diane at Diascat@hotmail.com

Webpage: www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/LGBT/

Meetup: www.meetup.com/njsierraclub

Facebook: www.facebook.com/njsierralgbt

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Treasurer	Jonathan Wall	docjdwall@gmail.com
Webmaster/Listmaster	John Kashwick	John.Kashwick@newjersey.sierraclub.org
Outings Chair	Wanda Ashbrook	pridegrlnj@aim.com

We are seeking volunteer hike leaders! If you are interested in co-leading one of our LGBTQ+ and/or all-inclusive hikes, please let us know! **We Need You!** Contact Diane Scarangella at diascat@hotmail.com or Wanda Ashbrook at pridegrlnj@aim.com for more information! Hope to see you on at one of the following hikes!

June 21 (Wed): Summer Solstice Hike at Wawayanda State Park (Sussex/Passaic Cos.) 4 p.m., 3 miles, easy pace. We will hike around Laurel Pond. Bring a picnic dinner to enjoy by the lake in the picnic area. Meet at the Lake Day Use Area parking lot, 885 Warwick Tpk., Hewitt. Look for the Rainbow flags. Park website link: bit.ly/3nluqvP Leader: Wanda A., pridegrlnj@aim.com (LGBTQ+)

July 9 (Sun): Hike at Harriman State Park (Sloatsburg, NY) – This **All-Inclusive hike** is being conducted jointly by leaders of the NJ Chapter LGBTQ+ Section and of North Jersey Sierra Group: 11 a.m., moderate pace. We will hike a 5-6 mile loop (3-4 hours) along the Pine Meadow Trail to Pine Meadow Lake, where we will stop to rest. Bring water and food. Park and meet at the Reeves Meadow Visitor Center (overflow parking along Seven Lakes Dr.) There are facilities. Hiking boots are recommended. Rain cancels. Co-leaders: Rebecca Wilkin, @rebeccawilkin@gmail.com (North Jersey Group), and Wanda, pridegrlnj@aim.com (LGBTQ+ Section)

Sept. 16 (Sat), Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge – Meet at the observations area at 12 p.m. This is a flat easy/moderate hike. There are trails and boardwalks, bird watching opportunities, and more. Great Swamp: bit.ly/434BKAM RSVP with Wanda, pridegrlnj@aim.com, or Rebecca Wilkin, rebeccawilkin@gmail.com

October 7 (Sat), Hacklebarney State Park – Meet at 12 p.m. The Black River Gorge,

>continued on page 12

woodlands, and trails provide a great autumn escape for walkers and hikers. Some of the trails have hills. A few bridges to cross over the river to other parts of this moderate hike. Address: 119 Hacklebarney Rd. Long Valley, NJ, 07853 Websites: bit.ly/45bd6jO RSVP with Wanda, pridegrlnj@aim.com, or Rebecca Wilkin, rebeccawilkin@gmail.com

It is recommended that all hikers use proper hiking boots and apparel. Bring tick/ insect repellent. Bring water/beverages, snacks, and food for a picnic along the way. Pets on leash are welcome at most hikes, but please check with hike leader if you are bringing a pet. Pictures for posting on social media at events are welcome, but please do NOT take pictures of people's faces without their permission. Tick, bug, and sunblock protection is recommended.

More Sierra Club NJ Chapter hikes are listed in the Outings Section of this newsletter as well as online at sierraclub.org/new-jersey/calendar

SENIOR SECTION / FIFTY-PLUS SECTION

The Senior Section is a chapter-wide special interest section for members over 50 years of age. The mission of this section is to support the Sierra Club's goals through letter writing, phone calls, and other activities. We work through a listserv, by which members learn about current environmental issues, how these issues can be supported, and places and events of interest to visit in New Jersey and surrounding states. In the future we hope to appoint members who will be responsible for leading and carrying out efforts related to those issues.

More about the Senior Section/Fifty-Plus Section is available online at <https://www.sierraclub.org/new-jersey/senior-section>. Visit our webpage to find out about activities and events, including hikes, cleanups, social gatherings, and other activities for members over 50.

Section Chair Paul Ehrlich p.w.ehrlich@gmail.com

Senior Section Open Positions

Vice-Chair

Seeking a volunteer to assist the section chair in the management of the Senior Section. Promote interactions with grassroots communities and individuals, as well as other environmental groups, using the latest science, data, and research, including cumulative impacts. Represent the Senior Section at meetings of the Conservation Committee of the New Jersey Chapter. Attend and speak at relevant seminars, webinars, and conferences. Advise and assist seniors on projects/problems related to the environment.

Conservation Coordinator

Seeking a volunteer to assist New Jersey seniors and others with projects and problems related to the environment. Interact with government officials and corporate executives to explain our position on various issues. Attend relevant seminars, webinars, and conferences and explain items of importance to New Jersey Chapter members. Sierra Club membership is required for this position

If you are interested in one of these positions, send an email to Paul Ehrlich at p.w.ehrlich@gmail.com and include your resume. If you are interested in working on other goals, send an email with both a resume and justification for the proposed activity.

Upcoming Chapter Meetings

All members are welcome to attend these monthly policy deliberations, held by Zoom video conferencing on second Saturdays. Zoom can be accessed from a computer, smartphone, or telephone. The Conservation Committee meets from 10 a.m. to noon and the Executive Committee meets from 1 to 3 p.m. For meeting link, contact secretary@newjersey.sierraclub.org

Upcoming Meetings: July 8, Aug. 12, Sept. 9



Executive Committee Members
Judy Minot, Stan Greberis, Kip Cherry, Rich Isaac, Paul Sanderson, Karen Becker, Renée Pollard, Joe Testa, Pat Hilliard

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Please share this newsletter with a nonmember friend and invite them to join (see membership coupon this page).



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The Jersey Sierran appears in January, April, July and October. The deadline for copy for the 2023 October to December issue is August 3. Members are welcome to propose articles, essays, letters, poetry, and art for publication. Group/section news columns are prepared by group/section chairs; Outings are vetted by Chapter Outings Chair Leona Fluck.

Opinions, unless otherwise indicated, are the writer's own. Advertised products and services carry no Club endorsement.

Thank you to all who contributed to this issue! This newsletter is produced mostly by volunteers.

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Nanotech May Be Answer to Fuel Cell Storage Problem

By Syona Gupta • Youth Committee Member

Automobiles are synonymous with the American Dream and adulthood. In high school, we wait for the moment we can finally grab the white card that is our license and use it to drive a car. In a few years, I'll be able to enjoy this pleasure, but the effects of automobiles have got me questioning whether I truly want to drive a car.

The automobile industry is responsible for nearly one-third of all US air pollution. Releasing carbon dioxide (CO₂), carbon monoxide, and other toxins, the fossil fuels utilized in cars are harmful to our health and our environment. A typical passenger vehicle emits about 4.6 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually. One ton of CO₂ is equivalent to three large pigs or seven oil barrels. The improvements in CO₂ emissions are not happening quickly enough.

To achieve a meaningful reduction in emissions, we need to investigate alternatives to gasoline. Researchers have proposed the use of metal-organic frameworks to store hydrogen. Hydrogen, a green fuel if produced by clean energy, produces a byproduct of water when burned.

How do Traditional Combustion Engines Work?

How does gasoline power an engine? Once you step on the accelerator pedal, gas is released from the tank to the carburetor. The carburetor combines the gas with air, and this mixture then enters the engine. In an engine, there are fixed cylinders that house pistons. Conventional engines use a four-stroke system to produce power.

1. Intake — A valve within the cylinder opens to let in the mixture of fuel and air. This fills up the cylinder, while the piston is pulled down.

2. Compression — Once the piston reaches the bottom of the cylinder, the valve closes. The piston starts to move up to compress the gas.
3. Power stroke — A spark ignites the fuel and air mixture which creates pressure. This pressure pushes the piston down.
4. Exhaust — The valve opens again and the piston travels up. This allows the excess exhaust gases to leave the cylinder, clearing it for another round.

While these four strokes are occurring, the pistons are connected to a crankshaft. This crankshaft rotates under the force of the power strokes. This rotary motion moves the drive shaft which ultimately rotates the wheels.

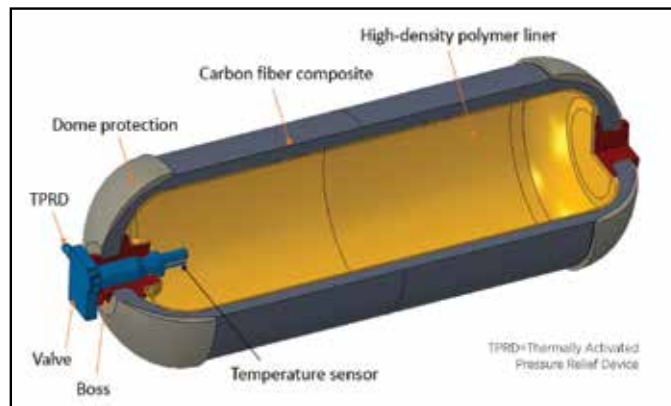
Hydrogen Powered Cars: How Do They Work? What Are the Barriers?

Now jumping forward, hydrogen-powered cars are a quieter, energy efficient, and zero emissions alternative to gas-powered cars while still having the same performance and range. Hydrogen cars eliminate the need for an internal combustion engine by replacing it with a system for producing electricity from hydrogen. These "fuel cell" cars work similarly to the electric vehicles we see today, except that instead of needing to be charged, they produce electricity while on the go. For a discussion of how fuel cell vehicles generate electricity, see the 2023 spring Sierran issue: bit.ly/3OfJRG1

While hydrogen-powered cars seem innovative and one of the many solutions to our climate change problems, they cost more than comparable-sized conventional cars. Suitable storage of hydrogen is one of the key cost factors.

Nanotech's Emerging Role for Storing Hydrogen Cheaply and Safely

Hydrogen vehicles offer shorter refueling times and longer ranges than EVs. Most manufacturers have opted for high-pressure storage of hydrogen. This is not only costly but also unsafe. Researchers are working on solving this problem by using material organic frameworks (MOFs). It is believed



This first-generation Type-IV hydrogen storage tank for automobiles is designed for pressures of 700 bar, or 10,153 lbs per square inch. Nanotechnology studied at Northwestern University can reduce storage pressure needs to 100 bar, or 1450 lbs per square inch.

Image source: US Dept. of Energy

that MOFs can be developed to store hydrogen in much the same way that a sponge can absorb and hold water.

Scientists have demonstrated that highly porous MOFs can hold large amounts of hydrogen at low pressure, which in fuel cell vehicles could be a safer and cheaper alternative than high-pressure, space-consuming hydrogen tanks. Hydrogen can be "ad-

sorbed" onto the surfaces of porous solid materials for high storage density at low pressures. These materials must meet criteria for fast charging (fills) and discharging (flow) of hydrogen, and the hydrogen must flow at a rate that is suitable for the temperature and pressure ranges of fuel cell operation. They must also last the operational lifetime of the fuel cell vehicle.

In 2020, a research team at Northwestern University reported finding an MOF that fulfills volumetric (size) and gravimetric (mass) requirements criteria: NU-1501-A, which they said has minute pore sizes that are ideal for hydrogen storage at low pressure and exceed Department of Energy specifications for workable hydrogen MOFs.

Conclusion

Hydrogen-powered cars are a promising green alternative to gasoline, as greenhouse gas emissions are zero if green hydrogen is used. To work toward this future, advancements in technology are needed. While MOFs can lower the cost of storing hydrogen, there is a need to be able to mass produce these MOFs. There is also a need for infrastructure (refueling stations) so that these cars can get the needed hydrogen on the road. Overall, while MOFs do still need further development, they unlock a new path for hydrogen-powered car development.

Resources

Northwestern Discovery: bit.ly/3MebFIF

Department of Energy Hydrogen Report: bit.ly/3Oim9EJ



A Perilous Life for Sturgeon in the Delaware River

By Tony Hagen • editor@newjersey.sierraclub.org

The Delaware River was once chock-full of Atlantic sturgeon, but populations of these legendary leaping fish have plummeted more than 99% since the 1800s. Just 250 adults or fewer return to the river each year to spawn. Scientists determined this by analyzing the DNA of juvenile sturgeon to gauge the size of the adult pool.

The numbers aren't much better elsewhere on the East Coast. Heavy river traffic (vessel strikes), poor water quality, and dredging have been identified as culprits in the demise of this species. A [New York Bight study](#) noted evidence of sturgeon inbreeding in the Delaware and Hudson rivers.

River conservationists have raised the concern that dredging and ocean traffic associated with the wind turbine marshalling area in Salem will make it harder for sturgeon to survive in the Delaware.

The wind port will be where turbines are assembled and shipped out to sea for installation. Separately, components for these turbines will be manufactured just south of Camden in Paulsboro. These are massive facilities accounting for hundreds of millions of dollars of investment, and they are intended to supply not just a few wind

turbine farms but what New Jersey hopes will become a long-term industry feeding wind turbine projects all along the Atlantic Coast.

The dredging at Salem will be extensive, but presumably short-term only, with some long-term maintenance required. Far more impactful is the annual dredging of the Delaware, during which millions of cubic yards of sand, clay, and silt are removed along the river's full navigable length. The navigable channel was recently deepened from 40 to 45 feet, creating more river disturbance.

Dredging for navigation channels has significantly altered depth, rates of sedimentation, substrate, and water flow in some areas, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported in a [recent overview of sturgeon](#) conservation efforts.

How much additional vessel traffic will result from these wind ports? New York's ambitions for a piece of the wind industry are equal to if not greater than New Jersey's, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) did a Hudson River analysis of traffic expected to result from wind turbine activity. New Jersey and New York

have similar targets for wind turbine completion: 11 gigawatts by 2040 and 9 gigawatts by 2035, respectively, and so a comparison is valid.

[NYSERDA projected](#) a total of 1,642 construction vessel round trips per year to 9 wind farms planned through 2035, and 20 to 50 operations and maintenance trips each year for each of those farms, once built.

"The relative increase in vessel traffic incurred by offshore wind projects [OSW]... is small compared with the total volume of vessel traffic anticipated over time," authors of the study concluded, or in the low hundreds of annual trips compared with tens or hundreds of thousands of non-OSW trips.

These numbers notwithstanding, it is not safe to assume there will not be any collateral damage to the Delaware River sturgeon population from wind port construction and operation.

Both the Paulsboro and Salem port projects are already well advanced in construction and could commence operations as soon as 2024. It is implausible to think these can be stopped and relocated now. Construction crews have been advised to modify their activities so sturgeon have a better chance of



Credit: NOAA

surviving, and such precautions should be extended to all forms of river activity.

In its conservation overview, NOAA reported there is evidence the sturgeon population in the New York Bight is increasing, albeit slowly, since the implementation of a 1998 fishing moratorium. "Atlantic sturgeon recovery will likely be slow because it is a late-maturing species," NOAA said. Female sturgeon do not reproduce until age 15, although they may live until well over age 50.

Resources

NY Bight Study: bit.ly/3OjI985
 NY SERDA Report: bit.ly/3WgGaCy
 NOAA Overview: bit.ly/3WmaKKI

TRENTON REPORTS

Green Acres Funding for Synthetic Turf?

Gov. Phil Murphy announced a proposed investment of nearly \$100 million on community recreation projects through the Green Acres and Urban Parks programs. Sadly, the project total includes roughly \$10 million in funding for artificial turf playing fields in communities around the state. Synthetic turf fields have a large greenhouse gas footprint due to their fossil fuel ingredients and the methane greenhouse gas emissions as they deteriorate. Additionally, synthetic turf releases toxic ethylene emissions as it breaks down. Testing has also revealed the presence of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), aka “forever chemicals,” in these products.

The funding includes replacement or new installation of synthetic turf fields in Mount Holly, Burlington Township, Egg Harbor, Bloomfield, Harrison, West Windsor, Branch Brook Park and Jesse Allen Park in Newark.

“Green Acres money shouldn’t be spent on artificial turf fields. PFAS chemicals build up in the environment and are very harmful for our health, especially to children. The ‘heat island’ effect on turf fields is especially dangerous on clear warm days where temperatures on these synthetic fields surpass 120 degrees Fahrenheit. New Jersey needs to invest in natural play surfaces on sports fields and playgrounds instead. Natural turf fields reduce stormwater runoff, are cooler, safer, and overall more sustainable than synthetic turf,” said Taylor McFarland, conservation program manager for the NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Give DEP Enough Funding

In the fiscal year 2024 budget for the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Gov. Phil Murphy has proposed increases in spending for many parks, sure, and wildlife programs, but the amount of money earmarked for falls short of the need and doesn’t account for inflation. The governor has earmarked \$289 million for the 2024 budget, but to effectively manage New Jersey’s public lands and protect the state from a changing climate, \$380 million is needed. Less money will make it difficult if not impossible to fund the many new programs and laws the state department of Environmental Protection is responsible for.

“Gov. Murphy has the goals for shore and flood protection, critical water infrastructure, clean energy, pollution reduction, implementation of environmental justice and more, but the DEP needs the resources and staff to implement those goals. We urge the Legislature to provide a reasonable source of funding so that the DEP can achieve what we ask of them,” said Sierra Club NJ Chapter Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot.

From renovating our water infrastructure to separate combined sewage systems to cleaning up Superfund sites and taking egregious polluters to court, the DEP must be adequately equipped to serve the public interest. It is critical that the Legislature allocate more funding toward protection of our water resources.

Advanced Clean Cars II Standards Make Sense

Imagine 100% of light-duty auto sales in New Jersey being electric by 2035. It’s possible if the state adopts Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) standards, as Gov. Phil Murphy proposed in February. An April report commissioned by the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council explained some of the benefits of this transition: significant reductions of greenhouse gas, nitrous oxide, and particulate emissions in New Jersey, and as many as 358 fewer premature deaths and 362 fewer hospital visits from breathing polluted air. The report also forecasts lower electric rates made possible by increased demand for electricity and annual vehicle cost savings of \$4.4 billion by 2050.

Under Murphy’s plan, electric vehicle sales would gradually increase each year until the 100% target is reached in 2035. He aims to have ACC II adopted by the end of this year. On the East Coast, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, Virginia, and Vermont have already adopted or are about to finalize ACC II standards. Such standards are important, because the transportation sector accounts for nearly 46% of New Jersey’s greenhouse gas emissions, and tailpipe exhaust exacerbates the climate crisis and degrades air quality and the health of all our residents.

“ACC II will save lives, slash emissions from one of New Jersey’s dirtiest sectors, and ease the economic burden for households,” said Sierra Club NJ Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot. “We urge New Jersey to move forward quickly with the [Advanced Clean Cars II Program](#).”

In 2021, New Jersey adopted Advanced Clean Truck and Fleet Reporting rules, which require each truck manufacturer selling medium- and heavy-duty vehicles in New Jersey to increase the number of electric vehicles sold in the state over time. These vehicles, including buses, amount to just 4% of all vehicles on the road, but they make up almost 25% of transportation sector greenhouse emissions.

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For information, write to the newsletter editor, Tony Hagen, at editor@newjerseysierraclub.org

Another Coffin Nail for the Gibbstown LNG Port

New Fortress Energy’s plans to ship liquefied natural gas (LNG) south from Wyalusing, Pa., through the Philadelphia region and across the Delaware River to a proposed export facility in Gibbstown, NJ, have been sidelined by the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, which in April vetoed the extension of a permit for transporting that LNG by rail. The company that sought that permit extension was Energy Transport Solutions.

Environmental advocates, including Sierra Club chapters in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, have fought the extension since the original permit was approved in 2019. It is unclear what New Fortress Energy’s next step will be. It remains a possibility that the company will ship its fracked gas from Wyalusing by truck, which is also highly dangerous to communities along the route.

However, in 2022, a New Fortress Energy subsidiary agreed to stop construction of an \$800 million LNG liquefaction plant in Bradford County, Pa., which would have supplied the LNG for transport to Gibbstown. It was hoped that termination of the Bradford County project would also end downstream development activity related to the Gibbstown LNG port, where New Fortress Energy had proposed to load LNG onto ships for overseas delivery.

Besides the dangers of shipping large quantities of LNG by rail or truck through densely populated communities, the expanded production and use of LNG globally would represent a vast setback to efforts to mitigate climate change, as LNG is a potent climate destabilizer.

Ciba Geigy Settlement Falls Short

Is creation of a park and nature center at the former Ciba-Geigy Superfund site adequate compensation for years of industrial contamination that still isn’t cleaned up? This is the settlement that the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) plans to offer BASF, current owner of the 1,255-acre site in Toms River.

The notorious toxic waste site was home to manufacture of epoxy resins, pigments, industrial dyes, and plastics from 1952 until operations were shut down in 1996. Tens of thousands of toxic waste drums were stored at the site and wastewater was pumped into Toms River, a drinking water source for nearby residents. The result: A sharp spike in childhood cancers and contaminated groundwater.

The last public comment on the proposed settlement was accepted April 5. The NJ Chapter of the Sierra Club has called for a delay in the settlement to investigate recent evidence of per-fluoro octanoic acid (PFOA) on the site. PFOA is a forever chemical that was found in groundwater at levels above DEP maximum allowable contamination. This needs to be investigated further.

It is also unclear whether the plume of underground toxic water is under control or when water on the site will be restored to drinking water standards. The Chapter has requested 3D visualization of the plume to see its extent.

“BASF is only on the hook at this site for 10 years, even though Superfund Sites take decades to clean up. The Sierra Club highly recommends the DEP extend the timeline until the site is fully remediated and risk to the community is negligible,” said Chapter Conservation Program Manager Taylor McFarland.

It may be too generous to allow BASF to walk away from all of these question marks in return for a gift of a 1,000-acre nature preserve.

Resource

Proposed DEP Settlement: dep.nj.gov/basf/

DEP Reveals Plans for Liberty State Park

In a long-awaited clarification of its position on Liberty State Park in Jersey City, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has described an overhaul of the sprawling Jersey City expanse that it says would not involve a golf course or other giveaways to commercial interests, as has been feared.

The multiphase plan would start with cleanup of a 235-acre interior zone that is contaminated with industrial pollution. This would be converted into parkland with about 6 miles of trails. In addition, certain tidal and non-tidal wetlands would be restored to their natural state. The Caven Point Natural Area, home to one of Northern New Jersey’s few salt marshes, would not be developed.

Other elements of the plan include extensive DEP construction of athletic facilities, including playing fields, basketball courts, and a swimming pool, although the exact mixture of amenities remains under consideration.

The Liberty State Park redevelopment plan is an effort to satisfy environmentalists’ concerns for preservation of natural habitat and open space while providing diverse recreation options for the Jersey City-area population. Fulfillment of this ambitious plan would take many years and require the cooperation and financial support of administrations that come after Gov. Phil Murphy.

“Liberty State Park must be protected from commercial and private interests, including Paul Fireman’s proposal to build a golf course for billionaires—full stop. This area is one of the only open, green spaces for residents in Jersey City, Hudson County, and surrounding environmental justice communities to recreate,” said NJ Sierra Club Director Anjuli Ramos-Busot